

Albert S. Smythe

POEMS

GRAVE AND GAY

BY

ALBERT E. S. SMYTHE



TORONTO
IMDIE & GRAHAM,
26 & 28 University.



Albert E. Knutson

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26 & 28 COLBORNE ST.

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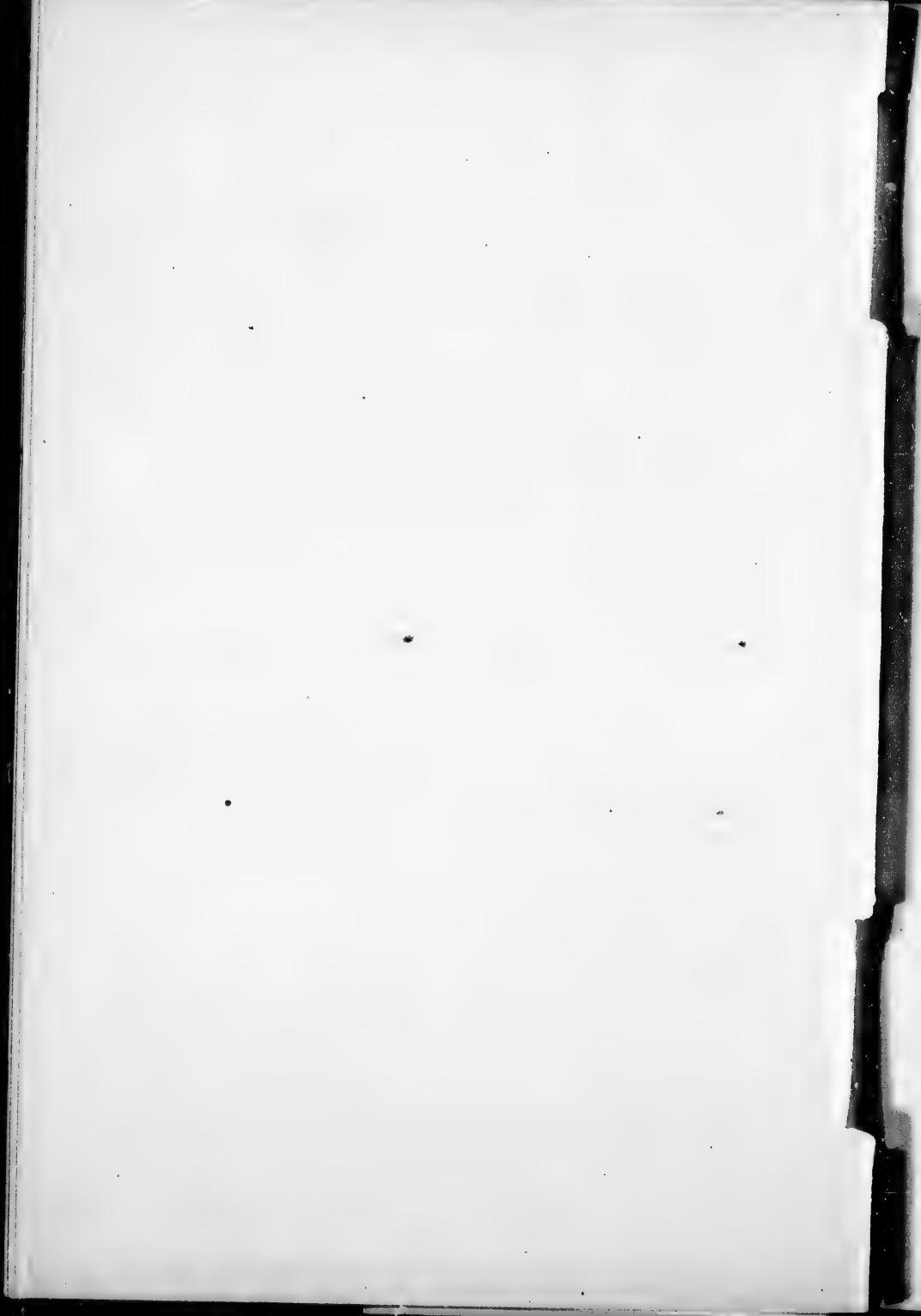
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AUTHOR'S NOTE.

In the autumn of '82 the writer first discovered himself in the columns of a leading London journal. By permission of the proprietors of the "Graphic" his contribution reappears on page 48. Perhaps nothing that a stern critic might say could evoke chagrin equal to that felt on learning that certain friends and acquaintance had escaped hearing of the occurrence; and perhaps no lenient reviewer could give more pleasure than the congratulation of those who had been more alert. Nine years since then of hard-working commercial life in Belfast, in Chicago, in Edinburgh, and in Toronto might indeed have dulled one's susceptibilities, but as enough spare time has been found for the planning and penning of these pages, so the sensitiveness has not been wholly stifled which derives great satisfaction from a kindly reception.

270 Major Street, Toronto.
May Day, 1891.



FLOWERS.

THE flowers that died in spring-time are the dearest
we remember,

They were fair and pure and holy, with the young
life of the year;

The charm they had was childlike, and the manhood
of September

Would forsake its living harvest if the dead ones
might appear.

But sacrifice avails not when the blessing once has
vanished,

The days grow ripe and autumn-houred, the blos-
soms are no more ;

The garden is not Eden, for the Eden hearts are ban-
ished

Where vine and fig and olive furnish forth their
kindly store.

Repining will not bring them, they return no more
for praying,

And the dew of tears will draw them not to smile
upon our ways ;

Brown autumn strews the pathway where our mem-
ories go Maying

Through the backward-stretching vistas of the
spring-begotten days.

O flowers that opened joyously, O buds that broke in weeping;

O children of the sunlight, of the kindred of the shower,

Still I love to think how human-like you wakened up from sleeping

When the hand of death was lifted, and the winter lost its power!

The Apostles gazing wide-eyed from the hillside of Ascension

Had company of angels on the sacred mountain slope,

And the flowers are all our angels, in their sweetness making mention

Of the better things to ponder than the failure of a hope.

"Why stand ye gazing idly on the firmament above you?

For a season though He left you will the dear Lord come again;

Go forward in your faith to those you love and those who love you,

And do service in His vineyard with the sunshine and the rain."

So each one tells its message, whether blossoming or fading,

And I dwell on all their meanings till they speak in one pure word,

Then the eyesight needs no vision, and the spirit no
persuading,

And love reaches to the utmost and the heart of life
is stirred.

The roots of love strike deeper, and the stems of love
climb straighter,

And the leaves of love spread glossier and take the
breath of day,

The blossom breaks its sheathing and the fruitfulness
comes later—

Love's plant of life springs green again and thrusts
above the clay.

Ah ! primrose, pale my primrose, that I folded in the
pages

Where I spelled the holy verses in the years of long
ago,

Your gold will tempt no miser though it fills the
golden ages

In the valleys of our youth across the hills, beyond
the snow.

I plucked you from the cluster long since perished on
the wayside

But for sake of simple innocence the thought of
you endures ;

And I wonder, ah ! my primrose, will one mourner by
my clayside

Give any deed of mine the thought that simple
worth secures.

Will any wreath, as I have wreathed the daffodils
deep golden,
To cast them on my coffin as I cast them once with
tears
On his, the gentle-spirited, my friend's, by whom up-
holden
The name of old-time chivalry sprang newly to our
ears.

Unpedigreed and patronless, but kingly-natured,
clearly,
All spotless and reproachless, and in speech and
spirit brave,
His fair name blooms behind him and the airs of
memory dearly
Take the fragrance of the noble flowers of knight-
hood on his grave.

Ah! would it were the only grave where fondest
flowers are rooted;
Ah! would it were the only spot where love in
anguish cries;
How bitter-sweet the token of the claim that death
disputed,
This solace of a snowdrop shining where our baby
lies.

But the flowers return in spring-time, bearing all the
selfsame sweetness,
And the spirits that we sorrow for, may they not
come once more,

With all the old world's wisdom, and with purer-souled
completeness,
Till the garden of humanity grows fairer than before!

Then violet, be fragrant still, and harebell, wave not
vainly;
We need not fear the winter, and we will not chide
the frost,
For I hear the voice of Nature, like a mother speak-
ing plainly,
Saying "That which I have taken, do my children
count it lost?"

R O S E S.

A BROTHER and sister rosebud
 Grew on a red rose-tree;
 The sun in the summer brought them
 Smiles that were frank and free,
 And the tears of the morning dew-drops
 Bathed them with purity.

These loving and lovely rosebuds
 Close by a casement hung,
 That lighted a room where sadly
 Sickened a maiden young,
 And they often across the window,
 Where she could see them, swung.

And she in the weary shadow
 Looked on the happy sky,
 And wondered if God thought pity,
 Seeing a rosebud die—
 Herself was so very sorry
 Reasoning how and why.

But once, being cheered and stronger—
 Able to rise and stand—
 She walked to the open window,
 Stretching her wan, worn hand,
 And gathered the latest rosebud
 Ever she saw expand.

That rose was the last gift Nature
Gave to her dying child—
A fond, but a farewell keepsake,
Never to be defiled—
The gage of a broken union
Soon to be reconciled.

She treasured it on her pillow,
Dewy and fresh and fair,
But it withered beside the fever
Burning her life out there,
And the rose and the frailer maiden
Died at the morning prayer.

'Twas the tenderest rose the maiden
Chose for its greater grace,
And the other with secret pining
Grieved in its lonely place,
Till its petals that fast unfolded
Fell to the ground apace.

And while they were faint and falling
One whom his love had led,
Came weeping to where the maiden
Lay with her tears all shed :
A rose on her bosom rested,
Beautiful too—and dead.

There are griefs in the great creation
Bitter as man has borne,
But the rose's, that pined and perished,

Leaving a leafless thorn,
 Is vanity, matched with the sorrow
 Many a man must mourn.

Her love was his crown of friendship,
 She was his heart-throned queen,
 And hers was the dear example
 Quickened and made him keen
 To walk in the path of honour;
 Duty and love between.

"O God, of thy tender mercy,
 Teach me to kneel and pray,
 And give me the grace to suffer
 Patiently day by day;
 O help me to bear my burden,
 Lighten my darkened way!"

And God in His tender mercy
 Granted the prayer He heard,
 And gave him the power of patience,
 Peace, and His holy word:
 And he offered his life to Heaven,
 Blest while he ministered.

But ever a rose could waken
 Dreams of the dead old days,
 Till he'd think of his Rose in Heaven
 Garnishing God's highways,
 And the pain of the early trouble
 Passed into living praise.

SONG OF A WORKER.

THE world is very winning
 At the waxing of the moon,
 When the harvest is beginning
 And the vintage follows soon.
 At dawn the day is smiling
 But I may not watch it then,
 Nor when gloaming is beguiling
 Can I rest, nor question when.

With pen and ink and paper,
 With ledger, bill and stock,
 With starlight of a taper,
 And moonface of a clock,
 I spend my youth and fulness
 In bondage to be free
 When half a life of dulness
 Has earned a jubilee.

Who cares my life is friendless ?
 Who cares my heart is tired ?
 Who cares the hopes are endless
 Ambition once has fired ?
 A thousand hearts are straining
 Against the steep incline ;
 My brothers, we are gaining
 Gold from a cruel mine.

Yet we who make it duty
 To fight for honest fame,
 For truth and art and beauty,
 Love, and a crystal name,
 Have tokens on the highway
 And signs against defeat,
 And many a forlorn byeway
 Has flowers to make it sweet.

Not hand in hand to conquest,
 But singly and alone,
 Knights errant in the long quest
 Each battles for his own ;
 But achievement brings us nearer
 To the union of the host,
 And the victors will be dearer
 Who have overcome the most.

The warriors are graver
 Than the merry sons of mirth,
 • But their tender eyes with favour
 View the fairness of the earth ;
 And some summertime hereafter
 They will gather in the shade
 Where mellow happy laughter
 Greets fortune long delayed.

But who can join with justice
 In the ease of that far day,
 Who toils not where the dust is
 On the hot and rugged way ?

Ah ! suffering is jealous,
But perfect love is kind,
And the victory will tell us
Why destiny seems blind.

What brightens fame in story
Can make the humble great,
And heads are crowned with glory
That bowed in low estate ;
Then, brothers, unabated
Be every high desire,
The garlands God has plaited
Are not for those who tire.

AN OLD CASTLE.

DOWN the long walk in mouldy solitude
 There stands a castle crumbling to decay,
 O'er whose desertion noon and midnight brood
 With melancholy sway.

A dreary mansion, dusty, dim and old,
 Whose doors shut in strange memories of dead cares
 Like ghosts that wander sad and unconsoled
 About the rooms and stairs.

A house of contrasts—peacefulness and strife,
 Content and fretfulness, and love and hate,
 Sober existence, and light-hearted life,
 The lamb and lion mate;

The idle wanton and the righteous man,
 The faithful servant and the steward unjust,
 With all the types that twice a century's span
 Could mould in human dust.

Fondling the moments of a mute caress
 Lovers have lingered in those window-nooks,
 And there with hours of labour lost no less
 Men bound their lives in books.

There boon companions led the night astray,
 While close at hand the weary courted rest,
 And clamorous curses rose in foul array
 Near murmured words that blessed.

A hundred scenes these haunted limits knew !
 What pleasant parties after festal cheer,
 Have said good-night, and climbed the stairs to woo
 Day's death on downy bier !

What generations called the house a home
 Since from the bridal, first its founder came,
 Till the last son of sorrow chose his doom
 Of suicidal shame !

When down the stairs the servants slowly bore
 The dreadful burden from the upper room,
 Whose shadow clouds and shrouds and evermore
 Surrounds the house with gloom !

No life now dwells where children once grew strong
 And old folk yielded age's slow demands,
 Since even Death was there Time has toiled long
 With his relentless hands.

No human sound is ever heard within ;
 A phantom race remain its only heirs
 Who haunt the rooms and make a ghostly din
 That echoes on the stairs.

Dear heart ! shall all our homes thus lie so waste,
 And with the record of our period's peers
 Oblivion take ourselves as men misplaced
 Among the newer years ?

LOUGH SWILLY.

I CAME through the still meadows
 To where the dead have rest.
 Across the Lake of Shadows
 The ranges of the West
 Gloomed to their utmost crest.

A sturdy-pinioned legion
 Bore heavy through the night,
 The mountain-guarded region
 Throbb'd with the burdened flight ;
 The long sea held the sight.

Voices, as from a distance,
 Were swept along the strand
 With pitiful persistence
 Crying " we have no hand
 To build the broken land."

" We, warriors of the waters,
 We, lords of towns and towers,
 We, chieftains' heirs and daughters,
 We, peers of ancient powers,—
 Earth is no longer ours.

" The days have faded from us
 Fulfilling all their fee,
 The sun gives no more promise,
 The night no new decree ;
 The shore is as the sea.

"The mountains stand up grimly
Where the rough tempests beat,
The waters wait there dimly
Around their patient feet ;
We have no tryst to meet."

Oh, melancholy voices,
Your passion is not vain ;
Unwisely he rejoices
Who struggles not to gain
All seasons that remain.

And by the Lake of Shadows,
Above its clouded face,
I came through the still meadows
And pondered on Love's grace
That leaves me yet a space.

NIGHT IN MAY.

BEYOND the hills the daylight dimly sheds
Some drowsy glances on the restful night;
Thus dreamily the day the darkness weds
And day is darkened, dark receiving sight.
The cuckoo calling in a far-off field
Echoes itself to please another spring,
The cry recalling how the past could yield
Sweet notes and vanish on a swift-flown wing
I love this calmness of the midnight May,
I love the music of the cuckoo's throat,
I love the beauty of that stilly way—
The heavens above—where stars effulgent float:
But in this lovely hour I am alone
When I could wish my thoughts another's own.

IN JUNE.

OH ! wearily and wearily the days
Have worn themselves from winter into June,
For tardily and tediously delays
The summer's perfect loveliness of noon.
The sun that soars in heat and sinks in haze,
The flowers that wrap themselves in scent and
 swoon,
The wind that hardly goes and hardly stays,
The lazy birds that chirp a slothful tune,
The quiet rippling water running by,
The leaves that rustle loosely overhead,
All peacefully I ponder as I lie
 Long thinking in my shady grass-grown bed,
And musing on them for a pastime try
 To realize the winter world instead,
And this seems like a dream before we die,
 And that is like a dream of lying dead.

R O N D E A U.

DEMURELY mute as Marion sits
And dreams, or reads, or draws, or knits,
One might suppose her merely fair,
But one who knows esteems her share
Of wisdom, and her wealth of wits.

For Marion wears the mood that fits,
And when the merry moment flits
Returns to some still sweeter air
Demurely mute.

If that might be which love permits—
A new dream comes, an old dream quits—
One might forget a buried care
And Marion hear the new love swear
The old dead vows—love's favourites—
Demurely mute.

M A R I O N.

I SAW the May-moon, Marion,
 Clear charged upon the sky,
Last night in the blue-gray heaven
 Where the day had all gone by.
The same white curve of silver
 I have known for years and years,
No brighter for the smiling,
 No dimmer for the tears.

I watched it sinking, Marion,
 Where late the sun went down,
And the stars came shining lonesomely
 To brood above the town.
And on and on I wandered,
 And through the glaring streets,
And over leafy avenues
 And where the lake-wave beats.

Still thinking, thinking, Marion,
 Of May-moons long ago,
That shone on Ulster hillsides
 And valley-paths below.
Along sweet hawthorn hedges,
 By shadowy field and lane,
Where I heard the corncrakes calling
 And the curlew cry for rain.

I do not murmur, Marion,
 These lonely nights and days,
 There is but one companion
 For all the wide world's ways.
 You could not know I coveted
 To call you by your name,
 Your beauty called me craven
 And put my love to shame.

And you did not stoop, sweet Marion,
 With favour in your eyes,
 But evermore your courtesy
 Was kindly, worldly wise.
 Ah ! how could I approach thee
 With no good gift to give,
 But a law of self-denial
 Appointed me to live ?

Four thousand miles, fair Marion,
 Make not the distance more ;
 The distance could not greater be
 That sundered us before.
 Not that I yield in honour
 To the worthiest that be,
 But the best of all, Mavourneen,
 Were undeserving thee.

WORDS BY THE WAY.

My love, I have no great
 Wise song to sing you ;
 No vow to consecrate,
 Nor pledge to bring you ;
 No honour high and rare
 That might renown you ;
 No fortune fine and fair ;
 No crown to crown you.

Only, Mavourneen, a pilgrim forever,
 Roaming the world, winning happiness never,
 Still would I keep thee—ah ! smile if thou hearest,
 Deep in my heart with a love-bond the dearest.

Had you been desolate
 And unbefriended,
 Our ways might wayward Fate
 And Love have blended.
 But Life has drawn you, sweet,
 By paths undarkened ;
 I pass your happy feet
 With words unhearkened.

Only, Mavourneen, a pilgrim forever,
 Roaming the world, winning happiness never,
 Still would I keep thee—ah ! smile if thou hearest,
 Deep in my heart with a love-bond the dearest.

BALLADE

WITH A BOX OF DAFFODILS.

Of all the flowers that creep or cling
 Or rear a spike, or spread a cyme,
 Scattered afield, or blossoming
 Lake-lily-like from mud and slime;
 That suck their life from builded lime
 Or wreathè upon the verdured hills
 Young April's artless anadyme
 None are more sweet than daffodils.

No garden ever pleased a king
 From Lilliput to Jotunheim
 That did not bear the flowers I bring;
 As asphodels of halcyon clime
 Fresh gathered from the meāds sublime
 Take them, and if your fancy wills
 Their sweetness passes Eden's prime—
 You are more sweet than daffodils.

I would that I my heart might fling
 In love's poetic pantomime
 Before you as a paltry thing,
 Yet, like these flowers, unsmirched with grime,
 But gallant with a golden rime—
 The dust of love—each thought that thrills
 To passion—ah! forgive the crime
 You sweeter than all daffodils.

ENVOI.

Marion, when flattery's loud-voiced chime
Too soon life's early music kills,
Think who, long ere the summer-time,
Knew thee more sweet than daffodils.

M A U D.

ON the Firth of Forth in summer, with the weather
 warm and clear,
 Strangers down at Portobello, strolling idly on the
 pier,
 Should ignore each other totally in theory, but in fact
 One's fancies grow to substance and subdue one like
 an act ;
 And though person, place, and period may be trivial,
 we confess
 There are tragedies in trifles, and romance in even less.
 Maud, I thought you very pretty as you watched a
 passing crew—
 Sailor-costume, hat and jersey, and a frock of navy
 blue—
 Far more fair than all the others, with a look that
 made you seem
 Truer than their little world is ; like a spirit in a
 dream.

When I read your name in silver on the trinket on
 your breast,
 I resolved to do it honour—unknown honour in the
 West.
 And though strangers, life-long strangers—better that
 than love's decay—
 My vow will be unbroken as the silence of that day.
 Yet I ponder and I wonder while my vow asserts its
 claim

How 'twere best to do you pleasure while I linked
 your name with fame,
 Such slight fame as I could find you, though we may
 not chance to meet,
 But a symbol of the homage I would pay you at your
 feet.

Would you care to be the model for a picture I might
 paint,
 Of an aureoled and sombre-clad and grave-eyed maid-
 en saint ;
 Or the beauty of a ball-room with the dignity and
 grace,
 And the splendid stately manner shallow courtiers
 cannot face ?
 Or you might inspire the music of a melody as rare
 As ever floated tunefully around a siren's lair ;
 Or would you be the subject of a lyric that would
 bring
 Its maker greater monarchy than ever crowned a
 king ?

Or will you be a memory that comprehends them all,
 And lingers loved and lovely all the years that may
 befall ;
 The vision of a picture to be painted on the heart
 And prized above the treasures of a garner-house of
 art ;
 A strain of softened harmony to tremble on the ear
 When day is very distant, and the night is very near ;

The echo of an anthem to be heard, but never sung ;
The murmur of a poem never uttered by a tongue ;
A thread of golden consciousness that once you were
at hand,
Far gleaming with the hope that side by side again
we'll stand ;
An influence for better on the thoughts that come
and go,
To raise the lofty higher and to elevate the low ;
A watchword prompting nobly till the flag of life be
furled ;
An ever-present witness of the beauty of the world.

JANUARY VIOLETS.

SING January violets—

Who ever saw them grow ?
 Yet my lady has a garden
 Where the north winds never blow.
 And my lady moves about it,
 Like a sunbeam through the flowers,
 And the year makes haste to woo her
 With the heat of August hours.

Sing January violets—

They reached me in the snow ;
 She sent them from a far love land
 Where pleasant waters flow.
 Where 'mid the Kerry mountains
 God made Killarney green,
 And laid the living glory
 Of Ireland's fairest scene.

Sing January violets—

It sets my heart aglow
 To think what fingers gathered them
 A little while ago.
 Before my lady's favour
 The winter frowns in vain,
 And summer will be saddened
 Unless she smiles again.

BIRTHDAY TRIOLETS.

OCTOBER is a pleasant time
Though violets are far away.
Around the fire at even chime
October is a pleasant time,
And falling blythely in its prime
Your birthday makes the season gay.
October is a pleasant time
Though violets are far away.

Love's messages ring through the year
And birthday voices give them speech.
With happy music, sweet and clear
Love's messages ring through the year.
With friendly greeting, kindly cheer,
And all the meanings love may teach,
Love's messages ring through the year
And birthday voices give them speech

You know what daring words may dwell
Among the things a year may say.
When all your kindred wish you well
You know what daring words may dwell
In some one's heart as in a cell
Imprisoned till a festal day.
You know what daring words may dwell
Among the things a year may say.

MARY STUART.

AH ! Mary, Mary, queen of hearts,
 Unhumbled by the years,
 Thy memory has magic arts
 To move the springs of tears ;
 The springs of tears and love to move,
 For both fulfilled thy fate ;
 And still will one the other prove
 And love be weeping late.

Late, ah ! so late for me to come
 A mourner at thy grave,
 When death has bidden all be dumb
 That would, but could not save ;
 Late, ah ! so late for me to weep,
 Who only know thy name,
 When those who magnified thee sleep
 With those who mocked thy fame.

The mournfullest in majesty,
 The queenliest to mourn,
 Most beautiful in misery,
 In misery forlorn.
 'Tis all the world remembers now,
 But never now to frown—
 The glory of a perfect brow,
 The shadow of a crown.

MY WITCH-WOOD QUEEN.

LONELY and lovely, grave and good,
With the innocent-hearted hardihood
Of a maid that walks in a pensive mood
My Queen comes up through the weird witch-wood.

Her presence enlightens the leafy gloom
Of the forest aisles where the shadows loom,
Where the fairest sight is a wildflower's bloom,
Or the lustrous flash of a peacock plume.

Over her, spreading, the green boughs meet,
Under her tread lies a fairy street,
Round her butterflies flaunt and fleet,
Flowers are blowing and herbs grow sweet.

She passes near, but the joy that's bred
In my heart as she comes is a word unsaid,
And all the pleadings mine eyes have pled
Are sealed on my lips with a lover's dread.

I fear to be graceless and overbold
To my Queen meek-hearted,—my Queen high-souled ;
And why need she know what my thoughts may hold,
If I love her and crown her with living gold ?

Her hair with a sorcerer's wealth endowed,
Has the golden gleam of an evening cloud ;
And her glorious eyes that are royal-browed,
Are sunny as morning and pure and proud.

Her brow is peaceful and chaste and fair ;
One waits on her words as half-aware
They playfully sweeten or soften like prayer,
And these are beauties a queen may wear.

She comes at morn and she comes at e'en,
And the day is a vision that falls between ;
Its sun may shine or its wind blow keen
But the hours lie desert that miss my Queen.

Yet no one knows her, and no one knows
How well I have loved her, for none suppose
I was ever enamoured of more than a rose ;
And nobody sees where a man's heart goes.

LILIES

I. THE CALLA LILY.

WHEN the lofty peerless lily,
Silver-brown and chastely chilly,
Hides the dream on which she museth
What a world the poet loseth !
She is queenly on her stem,
Though she wear no diadem;
And she knows she is a queen,
Self-contained, self-ruled, serene ;
No supremacy requiring,
No predominance desiring,
Owning such estate of beauty
Reverence becomes a duty.
Thus there dwells the stainless form
Even fancy fails to warm
With the dainty blossom-hues
Morning freshens with her dews.

LILIES.

II. THE TIGER LILY.

EDITH'S throat of marble whiteness
Shamed the tiger lilies' brightness
Where they blazoned, fiery, flaming,
Their imperial rank proclaiming.
They were proud and passionate,
She was haughty, but sedate ;
Heedless in her tranquil pride
Though neglected or belied ;
But they courted admiration
And grew faint with emulation.
Thus for contrast Edith wore them
And a comely one she bore them.
They, all eager to be seen,
Curled their leaves with conscious mien ;
Edith passed along, too proud
To regard the gazing crowd.

LILIES.

III. THE WATER LILY.

LONELY, beautiful, and stilly
Floats each leafy water lily,
Never rival claim contesting,
Only radiant—only resting
Through a pleasant summer dream
On a gentle, gentle stream :
Dying on the brimming flood
Calmly as they came to bud.
All the lilies, liquid-lusted
With the dew-drops that have clustered
In their shallow, limpid hollows
Where the gnats avoid the swallows,
In the loving waters grow
While their shadows shine below,
But their sheltered hearts of gold
Unreflectedly unfold.

LILIES.

IV. THE LILY OF THE VALLEY.

TINY tinkling bells of beauty
Peal forth elfin calls to duty,
And the fairy people rally
Round the lilies of the valley.
Lady Alice one day took
From the valley where they shook
Such a burden of the bells
Silence fell among the dells.
On her bosom, though, she hung them,
Where her laughter lightly swung them
Till the fairy forces hearing
How they chimed, all came careering,
And they crowded close and pressed
Round her lily-laden breast;
There she bound them—snared with art—
Slaves forever in her heart!

WAITING.

WHO knows my own true lover dwells
 Beyond the summer dawn,
Where all the thrilling, chilling spells
 That make the winter wan
Are powerless in the light that throws
 A riper ruby o'er the rose ?

Who knows my own true lover bides
 In that bright summer land
Where silent time and silver tides
 Creep over soul and sand,
For ever soothing, smoothing each,
 The bosom gently and the beach ?

Who knows my own true lover lives
 In such a sunny scene
That eager spring-time hardly gives
 The autumn space to glean,
And careless in the close pursuit
 The sower tramples on the fruit ?

Who knows my own true lover strays
 On shores of happiness,
Where nature decks the dullest days

In some enchanting dress,
And puts her fairest fashion on
To tempt the swallow and the swan ?

Who knows my own true lover waits
To welcome me to bliss ;
There, all achieved that separates
To share it with a kiss ;
Who knows how soon the darling hour
Will measure out the marriage dower ?

Who knows save only I and he—
No mortal else beside ?
And when men ask how this may be
A riddle is replied ;
Three signs are set to seal this thing—
A flower, a song, a bird's white wing !

THE OLD WALTZ

ALONE in the parlour, alone in the gloom,
 With only the moonlight to look in the room,
 I waken a waltz from the old yellow keys
 Of an old mellow Broadwood of old melodies.
 I linger and finger the music an hour

For the sake of the someone who liked it of old,
 And the music is strong with a pitiful power,
 And sombre with secrets that used to be told.
 The secrets are mute, though the music remains
 All trembling and stirring with dreamy refrains.

Alone in the parlour, alone for so long
 That love nearly tires of the sorrowful song ;
 And nothing has changed but the wearisome years,
 And nothing is sure but the shedding of tears.
 And nothing has happened for time out of mind,
 And nobody vexes, for nobody knows,
 And hearts that were bruised are consoled and re-signed,
 Though one heart dreams ever on all the old woes ;
 The woes that were joys ere the tale was complete,
 A the music is saddened that sounded so sweet.

Alone in the parlour; for ever alone,
And the love-music dies in a low minor tone.
I cover my face in a passion of grief
But only the tears ever come for relief.
For the words that would solace forever are stilled,
 The lips that would comfort have breathed their
 last sigh,
The wish that would cheer me can never be willed,
 And all I remember is bidding good-bye.
And all that I learn is the lesson that lies
In the tones of a waltz, and the grief that replies.

E V A.

HIGH, high, in the westerly sky
Lingers the day as I linger by thee;
Slow, slow, from the darkness below
Creeps the night over the brim of the sea.

Soft, soft, to the sea-birds aloft,
Whisper the waters that toss on the shore,
Rare, rare, from the mermaidens' hair,
Scattered and sparkling, the jewels they wore.

Far, far, there is shining a star
Pure as the beacon a seraph would burn,
Clear, clear, that poor wanderers here,
Seeing it lead them, a pathway might learn.

Soon, soon, will the silvery moon
Glow through a glory of luminous mist,
Pale, pale, in her vaporous veil,
Down on the flowers that look up to be kissed.

Then, then, when the children of men
Seal up their souls with a slumbering spell,
Sweet, sweet—and till morn when we meet
Angels will guard thee and comfort thee well.

LOVE LANE.

"O WILL you wear a nosegay
 If I should pluck the flowers,
 And will it be the dearer
 In four-and-twenty hours?"

"Yes, I will wear your nosegay
 A day upon my breast,
 And then among my treasures
 A life-time it will rest."

They have an old enchantment
 Of scents that never wane,
 And posies are the sweetest
 From Love Lane.

"O will you sing a song, love,
 With magic words of mine,
 Of prayer, and praise, and pleasure,
 The olive and the vine?"

"Yes, I will sing your song, love,
 And never may they cease,
 The prayer, the praise, and pleasure,
 The plenty and the peace."

It has an old enchantment
 The song with that refrain,
 But still it sounds the clearer
 Down Love Lane.

“ O will you walk with me, love,
Low carolling my song,
And wear my nosegay emblem,
And dare to love me long ? ”
“ Yes, I will walk with you, love,
Forever and a day,
The flowers will help to brighten,
The song will cheer the way.”
And 'tis the old enchantment,
The story told again,
For all the world must wander
Through Love Lane.

LIFE'S FAIRY TALE.

OUR lives are like our fairy tales
With wicked plots and heroes real,
Yet farther fetched the image fails,
Our loves and beauties are ideal.

But false or true we still love on,
The dearer often when the vainer ;
And he that loves when hope is gone
I do esteem to be the gainer.

Our purest love is spent in vain,
Unselfish, suffering, true for ever ;
Its bitter unrewarded pain
Is cleansing fire for all endeavour.

It tries all virtues—to be kind,
The cares one can to spare one's neighbour,
To prove it is the happiest mind
That makes the common good its labour ;

And life's attainments so refined
Are finished like the fairy morals,
And all our heroes are assigned,
“For ever after,” happy laurels.

ASPIRATIONS.

I KNOW no love but her my dreams behold
And she is fairest by a hundred fold,
And we shall meet before the years are told.

They say she will not come—she is too —
That fate will not embody one so fair
To be a mortal, for a mortal's prayer.

One answers, whatsoever ye require
In praying, think ye have what ye desire,
And 'twill be granted as thy prayers con spire.

But if she came not, could I cease to dream ?
'Tis better with its love and faith supreme,
Its dignity, than life of lower scheme.

My daily thoughts do not more aptly taint
Beneath the guiding influence of a saint
Whose character my best perceptions paint.

My work is none the worse that one stands by
Inscrutably, to prompt the erring eye
And wandering hand to fruitful industry.

The pen as freely marks the meaning line,
The digits still as rapidly combine
As when my dearest thought was less divine.

My dearest thought!—that daily grows more dear
That daily challenges a higher peer,
And daily seeks a more exalted sphere.

Whose service still must win my steps along,
Abashed at last the loftiest bards among
Where weakest music is a seraph-song.

Ah! love, while thus in dreams I seek delight
Thyself mayst walk at hand and through the night
To make the morning lovely in my sight.

Even as I stretch my hand and lisp some word,
The dark may lighten, and my dreams be stirred,
True life, true love, begin; my prayers be heard.

DARK EYES.

O DEAR dark eyes ! fresh wells of welcome truth,
Set in a desert world of fraud,
If I might gaze till thirstless, then, in sooth,
I'd ever look and laud.

How oft the coaxing glitter of grey eyes
And blue and hazel lured me on
To trouble me, too simple to surmise
That but a mirage shone.

What bitter pledges have I often quaffed
From pure-appearing wells of wile,
Blaming myself for sourness in the draught
Believing eyes that smile

And always smile were always good and true,
Until I knew the sometimes sad
Grave eyes are truest, best, and rarest too.
When guileful hearts look glad

Through fascinating eyes, who is deceived
Finds hid beneath the charming cheat
Sourness more sour, since cunningly bereaved
Of some expected sweet.

But those dark eyes of thine will ne'er delude ;
They say what is, or well or ill ;
Their pleasure swells communicated good,
Their graveness, with a thrill

Of sympathy, imparts a fated care
So kindly, half the pain is spared,
For in their depths one sees one does not bear
The bitterness unshared.

O love of mine ! if earth should lose her light,
And hope be quenched, and sin seem wise,
Then would I look, while all around was night,
On heaven, through thy dark eyes.

LOVE'S CONFIDENCE.

WHAT fault could be so heinous,
What word give Love annoyance,
That wrath should over-reign us
And wrest away Love's joyance ?

Though fortune over-shine us,
Though fate forego her promise,
What chance can unentwine us,
Or take Love's bounty from us ?

We shall be wise, and careful
To turn from Folly's boothful ;
Our love will make us prayerful,
And prayer will make us truthful.

For truth is Love's ambition,
And you and I have weighed it ;
And prayer is Love's petition
And you and I have made it.

BETROTHAL.

THE words of love are spoken,
 The silver silence broken,
 The troth-plight made, Love wears the golden token.

Fulfilment cometh later—
 True love's a patient waiter ;
 Life,—death—are true, and self the only traitor.

There is no fear in waiting
 Of peace and joy abating ;
 Love knows ; a prophet—Love—premeditating
 When faith can follow fable,
 Can suffer and be stable,
 Love—knowing truth—is Love unfit, unable ?

Go, mark the stars in heaven,
 One over-ruling seven,
 Far-shining see them, dim, dull, dark, death-riven.

With ever-varying glory
 They lighten earth's long story,
 But Love will see them change and Time grow hoary.

God's children's hearts are deeper
 Than dreams that vex a sleeper,
 These human things are treasures to their Keeper.

MARRIAGE MORNING.

ONE sunniest morn among youth's sunny days
When all the light of life—like that which passed
The eastern panes, and tinted glories cast—
Was summerhued for me with rainbow rays.

One happiest hour in all the hours I've knelt
And prayed for happiness. All sorrow-pain
That ever saddened me returned in vain :
Life's burden fell when love unloosed the belt.

The holiest time in church I ever spent ;
Not there to rest awhile and idly think
Or dream, but every word with thought to link,
For love was crowned in that new sacrament.

The brightest, happiest, holiest time of life,
God-graced, and gifted with the smiles of earth ;
A sweet occasion for the spousal birth
Of boy and maiden into man and wife !

A M Y.

I WAS a little lonely maid
And shyly timid, much afraid,
All my world was bare, but the castled air
Long years ago.

At last there came the handsome youth,
My fairy prince in fancied truth,
But his plighted troth made a broken oath
Long years ago.

I could not think he would deceive,
And greatly, gravely did I grieve,
Yet forgave the lies of his false bright eyes
Long years ago.

Another lover claimed my hand,
And bound me with the golden band,
By my wedding ring he's my fairy king
Since years ago.

OUR MAY QUEEN.

OUR May Queen is one for the children—
She leads them nor needs to compel ;
“ She is kind,” they say, “ is our sister ; ”
Ah ! that is a sovereign spell.

Our May Queen is one for the lovers
They are faithful and never rebel ;
They look, they are subjects, they whisper
“ Her charm is a beauty spell ! ”

Our May Queen is one for the elders—
They smile and they say—“ It is well ;
We reigned or we worshipped like this once
When Time’s was a powerless spell.”

Our May Queen is queen over many,
The reason is easy to tell ;
One learns with a little service
She rules with a loving spell.

DREAM SONG.

My spirit on wings that were strong
Peeped at Luella's pane,
While the light of the host of the stars
Fell in a golden rain.
My soul, with the scintillant stars
Peered in the dusky room,
At the dreams, in a fanciful throng
Filling the failing gloom.
My soul, like a fluttering dove,
Beat at the dew-dim pane ;
Ah, my spirit was suffering love
Wooing in vain, in vain,
Benightedly there by her nest
Cooing a tender strain,
While its mate in her maidenly rest
Slumbered and dreamed again.

My soul as a butterfly may
Floated with tiny grace
Through the zephyrous breath of her sighs
Over her fair fresh face,
And timidly passing her eyes,
Resting on brow, on lips,
On her bosom it trembled and lay
Light as her finger-tips.

Till calmly the god of the day
Rose with the eastern beams
Of the colours that earliest play,
Dawning with curious gleams ;
And back to my wakening will
Hurried my soul, it seems,
But at noon and at eve it was still
Dreaming these morning dreams.

DREAMS.

THERE are songs that sound in the silence--
 Tones from an angel-sphere
Whose harmony comes to beguile hence
 Souls whom the saints hold dear.

There are smiles that lighten the midnight
 Hours of the heart's unrest
With beautiful rays that bid night
 Cease to be all unblest.

But the songs and the smiles are only
 Born of a poor worn brain,
Whose morning is far more lonely
 Dreaming its dreams again.

COUPLETS.

ONE thought—two words and so the lines are
lengthened,
And loving souls receiving them are strength-
ened.

One love—two lives—that join together dearly,
While clefted heaven sheds its rays more clearly.

One soul—two worlds—till dying makes a single,
And all beatitudes forever mingle.

KISSES.

KISSES once were holy,
Lips that gave them, chaste,
Lovers once were lowly
Airs respectful graced.

Kisses now are common,
Lovers true are rare,
Those who kiss a woman
Only get a share.

Once we kissed the lasses
For the lasses' sake,
Now we kiss for kisses—
How the girls mistake !

WHO REMEMBERS?

Ah! who remembers
 The cinders lying
 The whitened embers
 The few sparks flying
 That soon expire
 When burning brightly
 The next morn lightly
 The flames leap higher
 From the new fire ?

Who will remember
 The frosty, snowy,
 Decayed December
 That, wild and blowy,
 Undid the year,
 When fresh and flowery
 And summer-showery
 With days blue clear
 June joins us here ?

Ah! who remembers
 The absent faces,
 And who remembers
 The careworn traces
 Of tears wiped dry,

When pain departed
And happy hearted
For hours that fly
New friends come by ?

These in their season
Have spent their treasure
Have had their reason
And wrought their measure
And lived their day ;
New words but bring us
What old songs sing us
And youth grows gray
The old, old way.

SEASONS.

SPRING flowers, spring flowers, for life's young hours
Of budding promise, thriving powers ;
When youth's warm heart with heaven-born reason
Unfolds like flowers that know their season.

Full corn, full corn, let that adorn
The manly hours beyond the morn ;
The time was long, but now the reaping,
And time stays yet before the sleeping.

Blown leaves, blown leaves, brown autumn weaves
In garlands for the trophied sheaves ;
Old triumphs through young lives are thrilling,
While dead leaves fall new buds are filling.

Bare boughs, bare boughs, let hope espouse
The dead bride-heart of broken vows ;
Grim winter locks the life-tide fast,
Till breaks the new far dawn at last.

BREEZE AND BLOSSOM.

WHERE do all the breezes blow ?

I know, I know ;
Sweeping over summer seas,
Sighing through the forest trees,
Flying over meadow leas,
That is where they blow.

Where do all the blossoms blow ?

I know, I know ;
Sweet in sunshine, fresh in rain,
In the woodland, on the plain,
In the garden and the lane,
That is where they blow.

Where should breeze and blossom blow ?

I know, I know ;
Those should blow and these should bloom,
Bearing fragrance, chasing gloom,
From the sickly city room—
Home of want and woe

A FORSAKEN NEST.

WHEN birds with busy beaks their nests were building

Love found a nest prepared—Love found my heart
I gave him place—to Love who is not yielding

When sheltering Love is sharing Heaven's part ?

When little birds were but half-clad with feathers

And all their nests were full of nestlings' play,
My life was full of glad sunshiny weathers,
For growing Love within my heart made gay.

When full fledged broods flew off on wings ungrateful

And lightly left deserted many a nest,
Love left my heart, for Love was false, deceitful—
Yet I may not upbraid—Love was my guest !

GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

"A ship, a ship a-sailing,
 A-sailing on the sea,
 Far wafted o'er the billows
 With precious things for me.
 It is laden, heavy laden,
 With a rare and costly freight,
 And it bears a royal maiden
 For whom I stand and wait."

A heart, a heart a-hoping,
 A-hoping on the strand,
 And longing for the vessel
 That ne'er will reach the land.
 There are scenes as fair behind it
 As ever blessed the sight,
 But the hopes, the hopes that blind it
 Have stolen all the light.

A life, a life a-wasting
 As ebb the tides and flow,
 'Tis bitter, bitter tasting
 The hopes that turn to woe.
 Though a wreck has come for warning
 And lies upon the shore,
 It is late, too late, for scorning
 The hopes that cheer no more.

EVANGELINE.

EVANGELINE ! Evangeline !
The dewy morn in June
That startled first those eyes of thine
From out their baby swoon,
Gave all the brightest summer shine
Beyond the light of gem or wine,
To make their radiant spheres combine
The sun and stars and moon.

'Tis thus thine eyes are always bright
With lustre liquid-deep,
And blended there appears the light
Of autumn eves that creep,
And summer noon, and winter night
And showery spring-time at its height,
To witch the dreams or wile the sight
As one may wake or sleep.

And love, ignoring tide and time,
Can reckon by thine eyes,
And call it morning's choicest prime
When their long lashes rise;
A noonday in the tropic clime
To feel them bend their light sublime,
And eve, while village vespers chime,
To see them grave and wise.

MY LADY COQUETTE.

A SUITOR came to a lady bright
And wooed her on bended knee;
“ I have honour and worth and a brave man’s might,
And love and a life for thee.”

She spoke him soft, and she smiled him smiles,
And gave him her flower to wear,
And sent him a quest of weary miles,
And named his name in her prayer.

Till he said at last, “ Sweetheart, sweetheart,
I have followed thee long and well,
And the time has come when we shall not part
Till the day of the tolling bell.”

“ I am sorry, my knight,” the sweet voice said,
“ You have failed to understand
Our friendship was not of a kind to wed
And another has won my hand.”

Her lover laughed such a bitter laugh
She almost feared she was wrong,
And wondered a moment of grain and chaff
Was the difference very strong.

But he thought "What pity the queen I chose
For the castle I built in Spain,
Was the poorest creature the whole world knows,
The vainest of all things vain."

THE CASHIER.

A HEAP of gold and silver coin up-piling
 For a duty, sat the woman of my vow ;
 Madonna eyes, and lips relaxed in smiling,
 The quiet law of peace upon her brow ;
 Where worldly feet went back and forward filing,
 The world's lily grew beside the slough.

Must the crowning years in custom and in payment—
 The priceless—all be lavished there unprized,
 And the pure fame so rich beyond all raiment
 Be worn where the vesture is despised ?
 Must the world, then, remain the victor-claimant
 For the fair sweet guerdon God devised ?

O our Father, is it selfish, is it silly,
 To pray Thee for a portion of Thy best ?
 My pathway is companionless and hilly,
 I falter, I am weary and depressed ;
 There is comfort where it grows, in Thy lily,
 There were strength were it laid upon my breast.

TRIBUTARY.

OUTLIVING all the hopes my youth confessed,
 Still toiling on, still vainly seeking rest,
 A world-worn stone that never gathered moss,
 Not worn enough to wear away the dross ;
 Unmoved by love or hate, delight or fear,
 Too sad to laugh, too careless for a tear ;
 I deemed myself the cynic that I seemed,
 And passionless as though I slept and dreamed.
 But music reawakened in my mind
 Emotions I forgot had been confined,
 Revived the kindness of faded youth,
 And taught my old deceits an older truth.

Among a crowd of working poor one night
 That filled a hall with easily won delight,
 I listened, with ungratified disdain,
 To song and speech and song and speech again ;
 At last succeeding some dull-souled harangue,
 A maiden sang, and made me glad she sang.
 Of all new memories that is most dear ;
 Like some fresh bird-voice in the dying year,
 The tones recalled the voice of one I knew
 When Time's white wintry rime was summer dew
 And e'en the vision of the girl's clear eyes
 Recalled the dreams I once thought destinies.

Like spirit lures her Beauty and her Song
 Ruled each a sense and led my soul along,
 While Reverence for the higher Wisdom sprang
 To second birth within me as she sang :

Lovely flowers oft grow among wild weeds
 Unmarked in living and unmissed in dying ;
 Lovely flowers, unminded, though man needs
 A Heaven of beauty to assuage his sighing.

Lovely lives in lowliness are spent
 And no man spares a thought about the spending ;
 Lovely ones, though man be negligent,
 Live on, work on, God's wish awaits your tending !

Consciousness of having done its part
 Without a wasted moment's indecision,
 Sweetly solaces the weary heart
 That waits the waking from this worldly vision.

Little monuments of duty done
 Are raised by many labourers unregarded ;
 Brighter crowns in heaven are surely won
 By those whose work on earth is unrewarded.

Thus closed the little lay she sang so well,
 Thus closes all of her I have to tell ;
 I never saw her more, but there's a place
 Within my heart all brightened by her face,
 And so I write these lines to her sweet grace.

A HAWTHORN BLOSSOM.

I REMEMBER well
 I wished, and she also—my Mary,—
 If the thorn above us were fairy,
 That I were the king and she queen
 Of the elves of the thorn on the green—
 As the star fell.

And then I can tell
 How I pulled two sprays of the flowers,
 One was hers, one was mine : they were ours.
 All the rest we left for the elves ;
 We only took those for ourselves
 As the star fell.

Alas ! it befell
 The life of her spray and mine faded,
 And the scent was lost that had laded
 The air, and all died that was fair !
 I grieve as I think when I dare
 How my star fell.

Down into the dell
 To the hawthorn I often wander ;
 On the grass I kneel, and I ponder ;
 Does she reign as an elf-queen bright
 As she reigned in my heart that night
 When the star fell ?

Will the mist dispel ?
May I look on the royal splendour
That her fairy subjects lend her ?
Shall we wish together again—
Shall we wish together as then
When the star fell ?

Or will fate compel
My lot to be always lonely,
Remembering happiness only ?
Will but half of our wish come true—
If I wish again need I rue
That a star fell ?

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W
W*MAY BLOSSOMS.*

THE girls of Greece made merry at the marriage in
the May
When the maiden bride was wedded 'mid the scent of
hawthorn-spray,
While the altar flamed with torches that had thick-
ened on the thorn,
And Athena condescended to approve the wedding-
morn.

I know an Irish maiden who was merry in the May,
When we stood beneath the hawthorn on a flowery
holiday.
Our hearts were wedded silently, and wafted on the
wind,
Came love with all the favours he bestows when he
is kind.

The vows of our betrothal made the hawthorn tree a
shrine,
Where the birds, with bridal voices, sang their love
and sang of mine;
The odour of the blossoms made an incense in the
place,
And the sunbeams threw their radiance on her sweet
wee Irish face.

A bunch of valley-lilies hung like pearls upon her
breast,
And I held a blue-bell posy I had gathered from the
rest;
We mixed the pearly lilies and the blue-bells, and I
know
We mingled all our treasures, like the flowers, a year
ago.

She
And
She

And
For
The
The

She
Oh !
Her
Her
“ Oh

“ Oh
And

ODD AND EVEN.

A LADY went singing along by the sea,
 The lay of a lover she carolled with glee ;
 The ripples of melody born from her mouth
 Were wafted away on the wind to the south,
 To murmur the thought in a mariner's ear—
 “ Though lovers be distant true love will be dear,
 Though lovers be parted true love will be near.”

The lady watched long where the water and sky
 Grew dim in the sundown and faint to the eye ;
 She thought “ When the sky is so near to the sea
 Should I wonder he never comes homeward to me ?
 With cloudland so near and the homeland so far
 'Twere easy forgetting the life he might mar
 In forsaking the sea to go home to a star.”

The lady grew weary of pacing the sand,
 And weary to death of the waves on the strand ;
 The marks on the beach were effaced by the tide,
 The hopes faded fainter on which she relied ;
 Yet watched she and waited a year and a day,
 While waxing how weary let lone lady say—
 Some lady grown weary of lover's delay.

She stooped as she stepped on the silvery sand
And gathered the grains in her delicate hand.
She spilled them with care and she marked how they
 rained,

And reckoned the motes in her hand that remained.
For one he would come, and for two he would stay,
The third meant return, and the fourth spoke delay ;
The last was the ninth and she cast it away.

She turned her again, and she turned to her bower—
Oh ! happy the omen, and gladsome the hour—
Her lover was home, and her lover was here,
Her head on his breast, and his voice in her ear ;
“ Oh ! love it was long ! ”

 “ Oh ! my love, I had fear ! ”
“ Oh ! love it was far ! ”
 “ But we meet, we are near ! ”
And love has forgotten the leagues and the year.

THE FIRST WORD.

AN angel came
And stood beside the cradle of a child
 And spoke its name ;
And near by lay the mother, sleep-beguiled,
A little space to sorrow reconciled.

His whisper woke
The babe, who feared not at the gracious sight,
 And smiles outbreake
Upon its infant face, and sweet and bright
His answering smile made shining in the night.

Gently he took,
As with a father's care, the fatherless,
 And let it look
On her who lay in widowed loneliness
Half-happy in some drewned-of, dead caress.

There he instilled
In it the knowledge of her motherhood
 Forever filled
With love, and care, and quick solicitude,
Guarding from evil, guiding into good.

And having trained
The infant lips to voice that darling name
That lives unstained
Beyond all speech of blessing or of blame,
He passed away in silence as he came.

At break of day
The babe awoke upon its mother's breast,
And as it lay
Called her that dearest name. And she confessed
The Lord is God who makes affliction blessed.

BOB AND THE STARS.

A VERSION.

WE went to the window, Bob and I,
Someone declaring the night so fine,
And watched the wonderful winter sky
Sparkle with frosty stars and shine,
And gleam, I thought, like the hugely high
Cavern-roof of a jewel mine.

Bob is a small philosopher;
I am the sire of the tender sage,
And half expect him to make a stir
Out in the world when he comes of age,
Though as yet his infant character
Only has reached the hopeful stage.

Bobby has curious thoughts and wise.
Some, like himself, could stand alone,
Yet might, when they leave a father's eyes,
Tumble down or be overthrown,
For none can properly sympathise
With thoughts or children not their own.

Now this winter night in the starry light,
Bob said a notable thing to me ;
He asked, and his voice so low and slight
Sounded somewhere about my knee,—
“ If the bottom of heaven looks so bright,
Father, what must the inside be ? ”

PAUPER AND PUP.

TRIED and true, tried and true,
Pup, stay near me, I've none but you.
Years upon years of midnight days,
Weary travel on flinty ways,
Scorching sun and searching wind,
Thunder—and lightning too, but I'm blind—
Rain, and I hear the rich complain,
Chide, as they pass, at the pouring rain,
Snow and sleet on the heartless street,
Cold and frost till one's heart is lost.
Weather and want and endless woe,
Sun and rain and wind and snow,
That's our part of it, Pup, you know.

True and tried, true and tried,
Best of my friends since Betsy died.
I am hungry and you are lean,
Skin and bones and nothing between;
Skin and bones and nothing beside—
That's how Betsy took bad and died.
Ah! you rogue, you know there's a bite
To save your life in the bag to-night;
A crust and a bone—well, it is fly-blown—
And a mite for me for bread and tea.
Then sleep for sauce with our bite and sup
Cheers our nights in the straw, my Pup,
Charity never has puffed us up.

Tried and true, tried and true,
Pup, what's left on that bone to chew ?
True and tried, true and tried,
Come and lie by your master's side,
Take your share of the musty straw,
Give me hold of your poor old paw.
It seems to-night I could nearly think
Betsy made me that tea to drink ;
Old Sal brewed that, the cross-tongued cat,
She's off to bed and wishing me dead,
And we're bound too, to the land of Nod ;
Scorned of men in the scheme of God,
Pup, it might be better below the sod.

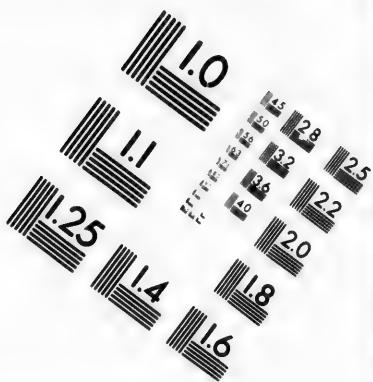
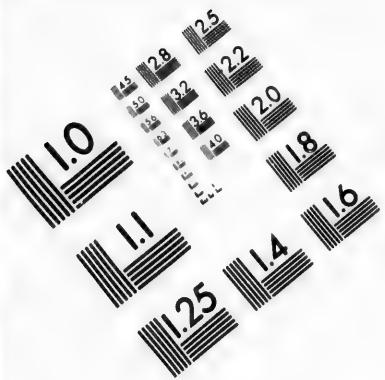
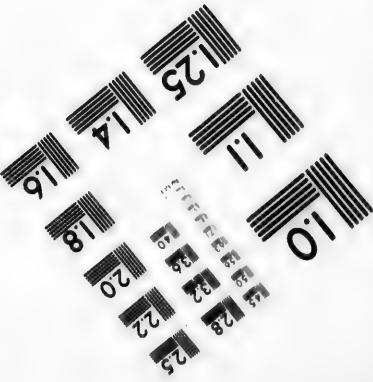
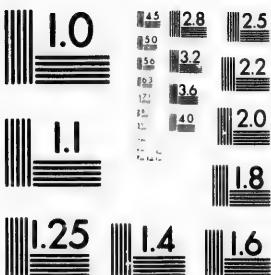


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THE SPECTRE.

ALONG the passage, stepping light,
She moves, half-settled, half-uncertain,
And from the window views the night
 And clutches at the velvet curtain.

The curtain with one hand she grasps,
 A missal in the other holding,
And to her breast the book she clasps
 As watching some dark scene unfolding.

The moonlight pales upon her cheeks,
The star-light from her eyes is dying,
She shades her eyes, and turning shrieks—
 “ My God, the lawn, my Gerald lying.”

And would alarm the house, but fails
 And falls upon the floorway swooning.
But piercing rise the dreadful wails—
 The doleful Banshee weirdly crooning.

The master and the servant soon
 The prostrate maiden there discover,
Outside, beneath the ghastly moon,
 The body lying of her lover.

For Gerald was her lover true,
And still the people tell each other
That Brian sought to win her too,
And wrought this deed upon his brother.

And Lady Kathleen pined and died
For death unites what death has parted ;
They say her spirit, like a bride,
Walks calm and fair, not broken-hearted.

LILIES OF THE NIGHT.

THEY grow about the city
Very beautiful and bright,
But the angels sigh for pity
Of the lilies of the night.

Among them some are stately,
And some are frail and slight,
But the angels pity greatly
All the lilies of the night.

For wantons come and tear them
Where they grow for God's delight :
They wound, but will not wear them,
So they wither in the night.

And men are hard and trample
On the fallen ones of night,
Though the sacred sweet Example
Did not turn away or smite.

Father, in great compassion,
Look from Thy throne of light ;
Thou lovest Who didst fashion
The lilies of the night.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

FLING forth, O stars, on Christmas night
Your radiance from the shining height ;
And borrow from the Wondrous Star
The light that led the Wise Men far.

Behold, ye Magi, in the skies
The glorious company arise,
Nor let such splendour, vainly bright,
Be wasted on the sightless night.

And watch, ye shepherds, on the plain,
Attending each your pastoral train,
Till heaven's glory, once revealed,
Invades again the midnight field.

As when the sudden angel throng
Appearing, sang the immortal song—
“ To God the highest glory still,
On earth, to righteous men, goodwill ! ”

A GREETING.

TO R. W. M'D., 23RD FEBRUARY, 1884.

WHEN Fancy with her whimsy voice
 Proclaimed your Tin-ware Wedding Day,
 Then friendship heard the Old Word say—
 “Rejoice with them that do rejoice.”

I give you greeting and partake
 A portion in your happiness ;
 I give you greeting and address
 A greeting for your lady's sake.

Two lustres of full life have linked
 Your home around with happy chains,
 While youth gives way to better gains,
 And love grows more and more distinct.

'Tis yours the helpful partnership
 In every trouble, every need,
 The comrade heart in every deed,
 The kindred hope in every good.

'Tis yours the trust of childish hands,
 The love and faith of childish eyes,
 'Tis yours to make the children wise,
 To twine aright the silver strands,

'Tis yours through childhood's gradual years
To lead them to the steeper slopes,
Still guided by a parent's hopes,
Still guarded by a parent's fears.

And not for all has God designed
The happiness you celebrate ;
There's many a lamp at death's dark gate
Filled full of oil, has never shined.

But God is good, we give Him praise,
And pray we may be spared to see
On some approaching jubilee
The children's Tin-ware Wedding Days.

IN THE TWILIGHT.

ONE evening when daylight was dying,
 And the stars glimmered—embers of day—
 In a seat by the half open window
 I mused over years gone away.
 I dwelt among beautiful shadows—
 Part sleeping and partly awake—
 That rose from an ocean of fancy
 Like mists from a quiet lake.

In my age I but dream of the buried,
 The unborn was the dream of my youth,
 But my dreams are now none the less pleasant
 Because they are founded on truth.
 For the sadness of truth is about them,
 And the sweetness of sadness is best ;
 The sadness that follows our troubles
 Leaves sweetness distilled in the breast.

Than the others, one fancy more pleased me
 As I sat in the solitude then,
 For it mingled the here and hereafter
 Uniting the angels with men.
 A page of the scriptural story
 Was blent with the life that I knew,
 Presenting a vision I wept for
 When it vanished away from my view.

A ladder of memory lifted
 From earth to the far-away clime,
 Whence a glimpse of the glory of goodness
 Shone out on the darkness of time.
 On the stairway an army of angels
 Came softly and solemnly down,
 Whom I knew, when they gathered beside me,
 Had suffered the cross for the crown.

There was many a fervently loved one
 Had left me in trouble and tears,
 There were some I had almost forgotten
 In the thronging of wearisome cares ;
 Yet none of them knew I was near them,
 Though some of them uttered my name ;
 Though evil may recognise goodness,
 Good knoweth no evil or shame.

The ladder grew dim in the sunset,
 And the fantasy faded away,
 I awoke to the life that is closing
 So soon to be dead, like the day.
 But I know there is ever remaining
 Some light of the love that has dawned,
 To lead through the valley of shadow
 Out into the Beulah beyond

DEDICATORY.

THE love of one who never spoke
 A word to her he loved the best,
Whose hidden worship never woke
 A thought in her unconscious breast ;
The love of one who truly tried
 To live for her sweet sake alone,
With thought and labour sanctified
 As if herself had seen and known ;
The love of one who once or twice,
 Just for a moment, held her gaze,
And gathered there a thought of price
 To cheer the darkness of the days ;
The love of one who looks to stand,
 With freer friendship, face to face,
And hear her voice and touch her hand
 In the communion of God's grace ;
The love of one whose grievous care
 Is calmed and tempered by that faith,
With half a cry, and half a prayer,
 Twines to her memory this wreath.

THE ROSE.

O ROSE ! console me now
 For heaven doth allow
 None else, but only thee
 To witness here with me,
 And keep to-night love's year long flight--
 O Rose ! a night of grief.

Thy life is sweet as hers
 Who met the messengers
 Of death and led them back
 Along the brightening track,
 For she knew more of heaven's far shore,—
 O Rose ! knew more than they.

As spotless she as thou !
 God—loving—did endow
 Her soul with all things pure
 That here awhile endure.
 But deathly sleep my love doth keep—
 O Rose ! a sleep of death.

O sweet and spotless Rose
 Thy life draws near its close !
 Sweet, sweet immaculate maid,
 Her life is only stayed;
 The day grows bright beyond the night—
 O Rose ! grows bright with dawn.

Thy beauty fades to dust
With moth-fret, mould and rust.
But hope and memory
Preserve thy sanctity,
And love's own flowers in Eden's bowers
O Rose! are flowers like thee!

O N E.

Of all the flowers at my feet
A single blossom was sweet.

Of all the birds in the tree
One alone sang for me.

Of all the starry array
One shone over my way.

But the blossom has ceased to wave ;
The bird has carolled his stave ;
The starlight shines on a grave !

HER GRAVE.

Let there be roses where she lies
And let there be a lily,
And when the daylight dawns or dies
Let nowhere be so stilly.

Let children come, of whom 'twas said—
“Of such-like are My Father's,”
And nothing base be hither led
While storm or sunshine gathers.

When many years forgot her name
And ancient ivies creep there,
Pray God preserve me free from blame
And pure enough to sleep there !

EDITH'S GRAVE.

IN beauty as He moulded her,
Four years ago God gathered her—
A tender lamb, and folded her—
An orphan child, and fathered her.

I stand beside the grave of her,
And know that lying shattered there
Is nothing that I crave of her,
For dust alone is scattered there.

But springing like the flowers on it,
My thoughts spring in the heart of me ;
I face the silent powers on it,
Nor fear that death is part of me.

FADING.

SHE moved about with quiet tread,
 With weary steps we still remember ;
 The sunshine kissed her drooping head,
 Like golden leaves in sad September.
 But though the chilling winds would shake,
 As yet they only breathed a warning ;
 And though she slept, she still would wake,
 And still we found her with the morning.

Her every act, and all her words,
 Were flowers untimely in October,
 That gladdened faintly when the birds
 Grown silent, left us grave and sober.
 We scarcely felt that we were glad
 To have her yet a little longer,
 We dared not think that we were sad
 She did not leave us to be stronger.

We knew she was not yet to go—
 Alas ! the little while was fleeting—
 She fed a robin in the snow,
 She kissed us for a New Year's greeting ;
 But when the snowdrops trembling hung,
 Then bowed we dumbly, sorrow-laden,
 The Angel of the Lord had flung
 A snow-white robe around the maiden.

JESSIE.

WHERE Jessie wrought her mission out—

A shortened chain of April days—

And stirred my faith and slew my doubt,

 And woke the nursling Hope to praise.

There lingers yet some subtle trace

 Through all the woodland solitude,

Some wistful beauty from her face,

 Some touch of her dead maidenhood.

Her home was near, and in this glade

 She told me of the Golden Gate,

With sweet-souled counsel wisely weighed

 And faith that had not long to wait.

So have I made my journey here

 Where first I found the Golden Way,

And learned how life has less of fear

 For those who work than those who pray.

But twenty years are sown and reaped

 Since last I looked in Jessie's eyes;

The suns and rains have scorched and steeped

 The lowly bed where Jessie lies.

And from that blue between the boughs,

 And these green vistas reaching far,

Her witness, come to prove my vows,

 Arraigns me at a solemn bar.

What shall I plead ? My years of toil,
My charity that sought no wage,
Or that pure love that knew no soil,
And set me this late pilgrimage ?
My God, I have not any plea,
My secret sins profane Thy sight ;
Thou art the Saviour, save Thou me,
And lift my darkness into light.

"GOODBYE, MY WIFE.'

WHEN Love forgets to veil her eyes,
 And wisdom heals her heart,
 And helps the spirit to despise
 Its baser earthborn part ;
 In grave glad days, all grief gone by,
 Seek, dear, the quiet place
 Where in God's Acre I must lie,
 While He fulfils His grace.

And sing again the songs we sung,
 And tell the tales we told,
 And all the dreams that make us young
 Will stir you as of old.
 The peaceful noons and nights will pass,
 The seasons swiftly turn,
 The snow will thicken on the grass,
 The ice will belt the burn.

And many a genial sun will bring
 The swallow to her nest,
 And many a simple flower will spring
 Above my shrouded breast :
 The daisy star in silver set ;
 The dandelion's gold ;
 The primrose and the violet ;
 The clover, honey-souled,

From May to May the years will grow,
 Each like a tender bride,
 With wistful eyes and thoughts that glow,
 And life intensified.
 And summers, each more brightly fair,
 With rarer charms revealed,
 Inspired with every happy air
 That blows in Memory's field.

Till in a far-off fading time
 The solemn call will come,
 That bids the sweet bells dull their chime,
 Earth's voices all be dumb.
 Another grave will rest by mine,
 A love-enthallowed spot,
 Till pity fails to read the sign
 And we shall be forgot.

Forgot!—but nameless though they go,
 While Love and Time contend,
 Love's husbandmen reap what they sow,
 Love's harvest has no end.
 The Lord of Life is Lord of Death,
 His winters wait for spring—
 Remember, darling; breathe no breath
 Of treason to the King.

PRIMROSE DAY.

1883.

Two years have westered since the pale primroses
 Were laid to wither in the great Earl's grave.
 'Twas timid then, but now the flower is brave
 To wear his memory till our history closes.

It shelters in secluded by-way places,
 A tiny thing; yet he was not too great
 To know and love it, he who loved the State,
 And knew the glory spread before kings' faces.

He chose it with the subtle sapient fingers
 That wrought the world's will and controlled his
 time,
 And moved all chords from simple to sublime
 In lordly harmony whose music lingers.

He wore it with the same familiar pleasure
 That brightens in the beggar children's cheeks
 Through all the April sunned and clouded weeks,
 When wood and lane yield up their yellow treasure.

And to the service of the Sovereign-noted,
 By high and low, necessitous and rich,
 From costly garden, and from wayside ditch,
 The vestal flower for ever is devoted.

He won—we wear—the pale but proud primroses,
Pale for his death, but prouder for his life,
Proud of the upward toil, the noble strife,
The honoured peace where that great heart reposes.

IN MEMORIAM.—LEOPOLD.

28TH MARCH, 1884.

COLD-HEARTED March's flowers of gold
 Must blanch to snow their yellow bloom
 For tribute on the untimely tomb
 Of Britain's dead—Prince Leopold.

Bereaved of husband, daughter, son,
 O Queen, our thoughts are first to thee
 And yet in silence must we see
 The bitter sorrow of a throne.

Young wife, amid thy sudden grief
 Thine infant's cry would make thee brave ;
 But looking down upon the grave
 The broken link of love is chief.

Our Scholar Prince has passed away
 Upon the verge of Easter-tide ;
 And so his Royal father died
 While Advent waned to Christmas Day.

The lesson is from Him who planned
 The Resurrection and the Life ;
 And people, brethren, mother, wife,
 Revere and love the ruling Hand.

THE FORGOTTEN POET.

WITH fragrance flown, as of a long-plucked bud,
The little song I sing with so much care,
Sweet for a day, will swoon upon the flood
Of days that will forget my song was fair.
The master-song is mighty rushing wind
Mixed with all fragrance, strong with a great breath
From cloudland, and the climes that win the mind,
And full of pulses to awaken death.
Full well I know the storm will smite my flower,
My tiny short-stemmed blossom of the sod ;
But when my flower and I have lived an hour
I'll bear it on the wind away to God ;
And wind and flower and spirit may adorn
Some Eden-garden where new worlds are born.

TO A LADY.

How many starlight fancies dawnd and set
And sank below the verge of surging sea
That rolls from birth to death's eternity
In weary waves that freshen, break and fret !
What momentary visions passed ere yet
Thy great, grave graciousness appeared to me,
Absorbed all radiances of less degree,
And gilded all the billows of regret.
What if a sphere above me holds thy home
Whose pathway circles higher than my course ?
A heaven-sent token and a long-sought sign
Forever over me thy grace will shine ;
Still may I pray with thee beneath one dome ;
Still trace my soul with thine to one dread Source

E D I T H.

O LET me sing as clear as merry Merle
Who does not mourn when morning is aglow
In April-time, because his nest is low !
I see the delicate custom of the curl
That fringes on her forehead's haughty pearl,
The ample arching brows that overgrow
Eyes wistful-wise, not knowing all they show,
And lips where womanhood has kissed the girl.
Nobility has touched her on the brow,
And beauty on her cheek, and by the hand
Has led her to a throne where many bow
Before the queenship of her loveliness :
But many stare and do not understand
What sovereign attributes these signs express.

LOVE BEREAVED.

DEATH has ordained thee out of all my dreams
And dealt me bitter check to my pursuit ;
My sunlight fails while tears are absolute,
And night falls ever chill, with scanty gleams
From clouded stars that mock the dull moon's beams.
My summer land, long fair with flowers and fruit,
Far cumbered lies with rotted br nch and root,
In dismal fields by hopeless stagnant streams.
Death has redeemed thee out of toilsome days
And bound thy harvest in a single sheaf,
While I went forward over saddened ways
Whose barren progress brings but slow relief ;
God aid me to the wisdom and the praise
Of plenteous years beyond this desolate grief !

DEATH THE REVEALER.

I KNOW that death is God's interpreter :
 His quiet voice makes gracious meanings clear
 In grievous things that vex us deeply here
Between the cradle and the sepulchre.
We, gazing into darkness, greatly err,
 And fear the shrouded shadow of a fear
 Till dawn reveals the vestments of a Seer
With gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.
There is a mystery I cannot read
 Around the mastery I no more dread ;
For love is but a heart to brood and bleed,
 And life is but a dream among the dead
Whose wisdom waits for us. God give me heed
 Till the day break and shadows all be fled !

AN APPEAL.

RELEASE him, beauty, from the subtle bond
Whose potency has made his bold heart meek,
And all his hopes, but those to win thee, weak,
And those to win thee piteously despond
Though still despairingly he grows more fond !
'Tis vain, whilst thou with dream-born tones dost
speak
Love-music, trifling with his thoughts, to seek
The happiness that braves love's magic wand.
Or since a queen, a queenly boon dispense
And share thy heart with him who holds it rare ;
Thou hast no love whose match he cannot bring,
Thou hast no loveliness whose eminence
Were fitter shrined than in the temple where
He is himself the priest and offering.

TO HER WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

Canst leave the spoil of Eden on vintage morns
To see the waste with toil and hardship quelled ;
Canst thou go forth as one who had rebelled,
Still innocent, and meet the bitter scorns ;
Canst take with me that journey through the thorns
And thistle-fields, undriven—self-compelled ;
Can Love be thy flame-swordsman, unbeheld,
With sterner heed than his who visibly warns ?
God's consecrated curse be on us, then ;
We shall fare forth unanxious, hand-in-hand,
To labour, prospering as our days increase,
Redeeming deserts for the world of men ;
Spring will be with us in a winter land ;
Grief we shall know, but also love and peace.

THE LUNAR RAINBOW.

ONCE, long agone, I saw the lunar bow
Set in a western vapour, dim and pale,
Cloud-pierced, mist-built of moonbeams, rising frail,
Bridging the night that drifted black below,
While far above faint stars shed gleam and glow ;
And fancy there, as through a filmy veil,
Beheld true saintly knights in silver mail
Armed, on the archway, pacing to and fro.
This was my love that spanned the east and west,
And these my thoughts, ambitions, hopes and
prayers,
That turned devoted service to their Queen.
But ah ! Moon Marion darkened to their quest ;
The vault of heaven is full of midnight airs,
The dream dissolved, the skies have lost their
sheen.

EVENING LARK SONG.

AT A RURAL RAILWAY STATION EN ROUTE TO GLASGOW,
LEAVING SCOTLAND, 9 P.M., 20TH MAY, 1889.

THERE'S the last lark in Scotland ! Hear him pour
His sweet enchantment on the quiet air—
A benediction or a vesper prayer,
Or praise for all the gladness gone before.
Still there is light to sing and light to soar
And all the glowing western heavens wear
Gold promise of the morrow. Does he dare
Exultantly rejoice for gifts in store ?
While I, with heart more like the shamefast flower
That grows beside his nest and shuts its eye
Ere daylight fades, dreading the sunset hour,
Leave these bright Scottish years and each dear tie,
Faces of friends, kind hands, warm hearts—Love's
dower,
Unthrifited, yet secure, while Time rolls by.

AN ACTRESS.

I ASK but this—to mingle with the crowd
That crowns thy beauty with a generous fame,
And guerdons thee with such a glamorous name
The world well wonders how thou art endowed.
Thy face were not more fair if I had vowed
A thousand vanities to vaunt the claim ;
And homage no new eminence could frame
Beyond the honour all men have allowed.
The sculptor, raptured with a perfect dream,
Who moulds it into mimic womanhood
And finds a genial god to grant his plea
And curb a spirit in the marble scheme,
Could tender no more tribute if he would ;
The Hand that made thee fair most honoured thee

A PUBLIC READER.

SHAMROCKS were better for an Irish queen ;
 Yet, being otherwhere than shamrocks grow
 One deems it not inadequate to throw
The poor best blossom from one's little green
Before the feet of her who walks serene
 Upon her highway, passing to and fro
 Among her people, leading them to know
What wise, grave, true and sweet things life may
 mean.
No more upon our baser bodily sight
 There breaks the rapture of the brooding Dove ;
But here and there are teachers touched with might
 And filled with gifts, devoted from above ;
We owe them duty, and they bring us light
 And healing leaves of Faith and Hope and Love.

OF AGE AND LOVE.

A WIFELESS grave, a childless funeral
Are sadly yielded to the silvered head.
The tomb looks darker for the unloved dead
To those unwitting ones who bear his pall.
They err in pity, not accounting all
 The lights on lonely pathways overshed.
Ev'n I, the loneliest man of men unwed,
Have large sweet hopes of meetings to befall.
Here with a hand upon the latch of death
 I thank God humbly, thinking, through this gate
 Passed Edith purely; happy Marion stands
A little way within in heaven's mild breath,
 With loving Mary whom I knew too late,
 And gentle Alice, brought by the pierced Hands.

A FACE AND A FANCY.

PROCEEDING down a swarming city street,
My footsteps fitted to the crowd's quick pace,
A strange idea held a foremost place
Among my thoughts; but from the throng replete
With charmless presences, there chanced to greet
My gaze one nobly intellectual face
Which drove away my thought in instant space,
Then straightway passed among the rabble's heat.
Nor have I looked upon that face again,
Nor ever has the thought returned to me.
Yet if the stately brow once more I see
That now so long so longingly I've sought,
I know at once both aims I will attain—
I'll find it knitted, musing on my thought.

IN THE NIGHT WATCH.

THE morn was bright, and prophesied a day
That was fulfilled—that passed in facile peace
To halt at eve, and fade with slow decrease
Through crimson sunset, gold, and twilight gray
Until the night that leadeth home the stray
Fell darkly down and closed the little lease
Allowed our labour to begin and cease—
The labour that is love, and loves to pray.
Now do the starbeams smile upon the few
Who prayed and loved, and laboured all the hours
Their fields are moistened with a fresher dew,
Methinks, the while the wakeful wanton cowers
Unfavoured. But the truth returns anew—
That just and unjust share both shine and showers.

THE SLAUGHTER OF AGAG.

I SAMUEL, XV.

"SURELY the bitterness of death is past,"
Cried he whose safety Saul the sovereign willed
When all the blood of Amalek else was spilled
And at his nation's grave he stood, the last.
But Samuel came with countenance overcast,
With wrath aroused and charity all chilled,
And there before the Lord was Agag killed,
Hewed into pieces by the Enthusiast.
Prophet of Love ! whose covenant hath reversed
The tyranny that bruised the broken reed,
Be Priest of Love and bless where all have cursed ;
Spread Thy mild rule till Hate itself be freed,
And be the King of Love whose wisdom first
Is pure, then peaceable, and saves indeed.

IN RECOGNITION.

BROTHER, your lyrics pass the laws of kings
Whose dread decrees but steeled the captive's heart
Your home-taught lays a softer power impart,—
Love, joy, and peace, the might that mercy brings :
And, though your muse lack flight of angel's wings,
To walk and talk with men is no mean art,
Strong in life's straits, secure against death's dart,
Attuned to truth, foreprizing hallowed things.
Not of the mockers, nor of those who make
Love's sacrament a feasting, passion-spiced ;
Not lucre-thrall'd, nor cankered with the ache
Of envy ; free of almsdeed honour-priced ;
Not of the world ; but humbly, for His sake,
Striving the nobler manhood after Christ.

TO CERTAIN MERCHANTS IN TORONTO.

LOVE is not business-like—the generous heart,
 You say, would ruin trade ! Has Commerce, then,
 Declined to that low level of the men
All worlds will scorn ? Must wealth depart
Without the thrift of Ananias' art,
 And base Gehazi ply a prosperous pen
 With Pharisaic wolves in Demas' den,
While Judas' thirty pieces rule the mart ?
May God forbid, and give us wrath to rise
 And right these hirelings in their paltry due,
 Nor shriek to hear Czar-smitten Russia's woes
And turn deaf ears when wretched store-slaves sue
 About our feet—bondmen and maids, whose eyes
 Turn with the curse of want to you, their foes.

A CITY MINSTREL'S MUSIC.

THE string-struck strains, though stained with taint
of earth—

Alas ! that ever art betrays earth-taint—
Were tinged with tunefulness so utter quaint,
With hazard harmony of such weird worth,
With delicacy of mild-mellow mirth;
Commixed with tender touches of supplaint,
In sudden minor sadness fitful-faint,

They, Orphean-born, won honour to their birth,
And claimed a crowd from out the passers by,

And chose a chord in every crowded soul,
That, softly docile to the spirit-stir
Gave spirit-music ; which arose on high
With each who reached his moonward garret goal
And gave a memory to the dulcimer.

A BONNET.

(WITH APOLOGIES TO DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.)

A BONNET is a woman's monument—
Memorial of her milliner's aptitude
To parallel her moral hardihood.
Whether on morning calls or shopping bent
Of every sumptuous fabric reverent,
Fashioned in ribbons or with lace endued,
She bears her own till Church and State have
viewed
Its flowering crest, unrivalled—eminent.

A bonnet is a coin : the bill reveals
How much, and to what creditor 'tis due ;
Nor all the might of conjugal appeals
Avails, when fashion offers something new ;
Reason retires, Love grieves, but Woman kneels
In mental adoration at the view.

SPARROWS.

IN a fashionable gutter,
 By Chicago reckoned utter,
 Two birds were heard conversing on the weather;
 And the first declared—with weight—
 That he'd like to know the date
 When refrigerated sparrows paired together:

He believed that Valentine
 On the other side the brine,
 Had decided on the middle of the month,
 "But it seems," he said, "to me
 That the period here must be
 Deferred to February thirty-oneth."

"I concede," said number two,
 "The justice of your view,
 For where's the good in getting up a wedding,
 When you'd search for half a day
 For a mouldy bit of hay,
 Or a feather that was thawed enough for bedding

"I have bought a marriage license,
 And of course I have a high sense
 Of my duty to the warbler who consented,
 But one needn't scoop a nest
 In a chunk of ice and rest
 With the notion she'll be more than half contented

"Despair has turned me black;
 I have shivers down my back,
 And my tail is little better than an icicle ;
 It's a skeleton I am,
 And a feather-coated sham,
 For I'm skinnier and leaner than a bicycle!"

Just then came flying by
 A third with merry cry—
 "The thaw has started in to-day for keeps!"
 And they cocked their little tails,
 For their courage never fails,
 And the wedding-cards are out among the Cheeps.

* * * * *

Little buccaneering birdie
 You are stout of heart and sturdy ;
 There is something of the Saxon in your pluck ;
 And I think you may suggest
 From that tangle-town, your nest,
 That we must not trust our happiness to luck.

You have conquered every storm
 And your breast is throbbing warm
 For the building and the brooding soon to be ;
 Who fashioned you will feed you,
 Who laid your path will lead you,
 On the thoroughfare, the house-top, or the tree.

KATE BERRY.

I'd have thought it more romantic
 Had we been some birthdays older,
 Or if you'd been less pedantic,
 And I just a trifle bolder.
 But you looked like such a maiden
 As one would not dare to flutter,
 With your bag of school-books laden,
 And the task I heard you mutter.
 So I only sat and looked,
 And you only sat and read,
 And we could not be rebuked
 For anything ill-bred.

I'd have though it more romantic
 Had the scene been somewhat finer,
 Were it crossing the Atlantic
 Cabin passage on a liner ;
 On a stage-coach even, sitting,
 As true lovers long ago did,
 Or a ferry-boat were fitting,
 Some fine morning, overloaded.
 But we met as fate preferred,
 In a vulgar railway-train,
 Where the carriage was a third,
 And the seats were hard and plain.

I'd have thought it more romantic
 Had there been an introduction,
 But though courtiers may go frantic,
 Fate is deaf to all instruction.
 Yet while one must live politely,
 Be it ne'er so inconvenient,
 And as custom binds so tightly
 Luck might sometimes be more lenient.
 Still—by a curious hap—
 I saw your pretty name,
 the bag, below the flap,
 When you opened up the same.

And in Rob Roy's part of Stirling,
 remember where to drop at,
 For the railway now goes whirling
 Where the coaches used to stop at.
 I can fancy what your home is,
 What the garden and the gate is,
 Neat and sweet as honey-comb is,
 Trim with roses and clematis.
 And you might be at the door,
 Or a window open wide,
 And apparelled as before
 With a maiden's modest pride.

But I'd think it most poetic
 Should I find you some vacation,
 Seeking intercourse æsthetic
 In a classic compilation;

But the ancient slightly hateful
When you wanted to be merry,
And a modern bard more grateful
To your taste—sweet Katie Berry.

Ah! my Katie—bonnie Kate—
If we ever meet anew
And it be not all too late
I'll pluck heart enough to woo.

IN LODGINGS.

How Alice would smile if she saw me recline
 In my easiest chair to look over my pictures,
 And pause at one portrait that isn't divine
 Yet doesn't permit any critical strictures.
 She would say what a fool I was doting on this,
 Till my arm round her waist became very ecstatic—
 Now you'd almost suppose it was naughty to kiss
 When she wants to be very dogmatic.

If Alice were here she would probably smile
 At my poor little wofully modest interior ;
 She'd compare it with quarters I've had, and the style
 Is decidedly shabby and wholly inferior.
 But one cannot live always in clover and June,
 Nor while making a fortune abide in a palace
 I'm content to be thrifty to-day for the boon
 Of spending to-morrow with Alice.

I have rented a room in the rear of the flat,
 And the window looks out on a desolate entry,
 Where midnight discovers the jubilant cat,
 And a dolorous dog keeping vigilant sentry ;
 Yet the prospect is not at all bad—when you think—
 You can see a few far-away stars when they're
 shining,
 And the moonlight bestows an occasional blink,
 With suggestions of clouds with a lining.

There's an almanac stuck on the back of a door,
 And a map of the city is pinned to another ;
 Here a photograph hangs of my *colleen asthore*,
 And one over there they say favours my mother ;
 Here's a table with trumpery, papers, and books ;
 Here's a basin and highly unclassical chalice
 In exchange for the brooks and the flies and the hooks
 And the last summer's angling with Alice.

My trio of chairs might make room for some more
 If my drawers and my trunk were a thought less
 capacious ;
 If the bed didn't straddle all over the floor
 You might come to believe the apartment was
 spacious.
 But the walls are not distant enough to be cold,
 Nor to lend the enchantment that tickles the poet,
 And at least if the place be a den—I'm consoled
 That there isn't a grumbler to know it.

Some other folks live in the chambers around,
 For I hear their alarums' importunate warning ;
 You can study the punctual paganish sound
 Through deplorably barbarous hours of the morning,
 But that is as near as these strangers attain
 To arousing a thought of goodwill or of malice ;
 The day has its labour, the hours that remain
 I lavish on thoughts about Alice.

LADY MYRTLE DANCED A WALTZ.

My heels are playing on the pavement,
 My wits rebel and play me false,
 For fancy o'er an old enslavement
 Plays, while the soldiers play a waltz.
 And so I cannot but remember—
 The music puts me in its debt—
 A ball-night in a white December,
 A tennis-lawn with May-dew wet.

'Tis strange that after many seasons
 We like to see the old dim stars,
 And spite of half a hundred reasons,
 Gaze from behind the old cell-bars.
 My heart's a graveyard ; often weeping
 My hopes and thoughts sit there in black,
 For there my dearest loves are sleeping,
 All dead in early youth, good luck !

Love ratifies no vain averment
 Or I would show you, face to face,
 Recalled once more from long interment,
 A resurrection full of grace ;
 That you from phantom feet the lightest,
 From fairy forms might choose the best,
 From brilliant dames select the brightest—
 And yield what no one will contest.

You could not then conceive it curious
A soldiers' band should make me dull—
You think my sentiment is spurious ?—
My friend, you're weighted with a skull.
Hope waits on consciences that suffer,
Hearts soften that are hard as stick,
The thinly skinned may yet grow tougher,
But nothing saves a head that's thick.

I'll call on someone else to measure
The merits of my dreamland bride,
Or at my own abundant leisure
Discuss the maiden and decide.
They called her clever, sweet, and pious,
I saw it shining in her eyes ;
But evermore the gods deny us
The wives we think we most could prize.

I heard her sing a glorious ballad,
They told me that she studied hard,
I helped her to the chicken salad
With feelings of profound regard.
And never spoke to her thereafter,
But heard of her at distant whiles,
For where she came came merry laughter,
And where she was were pleasant smiles.

I call them flowers, the passion fancies
That cumber one with needless cares,
The social roses, fashion pansies—
Who likes may call them weeds or tares.

Love's acre is extremely fertile
In immortelles that last for hours,
But here's a sprig of real Myrtle
To grace my bunch of passion flowers.

AN EMPTY PROGRAMME.

ONE guest will claim
 No dance to-night;
No charming dame
 Can charm him quite.
From square to round
 The music runs,
He likes the sound—
 The dance he shuns.
A lily stoops,
 A rose attracts,
A wall-flower hopes,
 A willow acts ;
“ He is a clown ! ”
 “ He cannot dance ! ”
The maidens frown,
 And look askance.
“ What brings him here ? ”
 Asks curious Belle ;
Suppose, my dear,
 For news to tell.
His eyes and ears
 Are chroniclers,
And someone hears
 Of all occurs,

A distant hand
And darling face,
His thoughts command
In this gay place.
The world may smile,
He smiles at heart,
And for awhile
He dwells apart.
In after days
The world will blow
Some feather-phrase—
“I told you so!”—
From tongue to tongue,
And make believe
His heart was hung
Upon his sleeve.
But not to-night
The world divines
What love may write
Between the lines.

CUPID AND CUPIDITY.

THERE are blessings still in store
 When we're desperate of the least ;
 I have fallen in love once more
 Though I thought I quite had ceased.
 Once again I feel the ache,
 And the yearning and the flame,
 And the thrill you can't mistake
 When you hear the lady's name.

She's so positively rich
 Quite a host of fellows vow
 That she ought to settle which
 She proposes to endow.
 But her heart's a secret shrine
 Where a magic fountain drips ;
 She would scorn to waste love's wine
 On their avaricious lips

I exhibit ignorance
 Of her father's stocks and shares,
 And when people talk finance
 I assume superior airs.
 Yet with wariness and wile
 Though my wits are well combined,
 Still her red lips do not smile,
 Nor her pretty eyes look kind.

Every hope and wish beside,
 Every prospect, faint or large,
 I'd forego if she'd confide
 Her dear future to my charge.
 For love little recks of thrift
 When youth's passion gathers heat ;
 All my life in one great gift
 I would lavish at her feet.

She has self-assertive ways
 And her plans are all her own,
 What she purchases or pays
 Is her business alone.
 But upon her haughty brow
 Other dealings will appear ;
 There is many a happy vow
 To be whispered in her ear.

Not in politics profound
 She is clever in the house ;
 She will stand upon her ground
 During rumours of a mouse.
 And she never faints of fright
 When a chimney goes on fire,
 While a thunderstorm at night
 Is a thing we both admire.

She has principles of dress
 Which respect the latest code,
 But she quite avoids excess
 And abhors the waspish mode.

She has never heaped her head
 With a trophy of the chase ;
 She objects to brilliant red,
 And despises modern lace.

With a talent quite unfeigned
 She is court and kitchen wise ;
 And phenomenally trained
 She can cook and criticise.
 She could bake you white or brown,
 And the servants proudly say
 You must tie her sponge-cake down
 Lest it rise and float away.

For good music and high art,
 For the ball-room and the street,
 Growing native in her heart
 That rare blossom—Taste—you meet.
 She detests (I hate it too)
 All society veneer,
 And the way she looks it through
 Is distractingly severe.

While the flowers that seek the sun
 Are the soonest flowers to fall,
 Fruit the hardest to be won
 Is the sweetest after all.
 So I humour her conceits
 And endeavour not to vex ;
 Could you win her—Hope repeats—
 You could sign your name to cheques.

TRIOLET.

LOVE has such a lot to say,
 Christmas says it in a word,
Half in earnest, half in play,
Love has such a lot to say
Sorrow sets a holiday
 Comforted with all she heard.
Love has such a lot to say
 Christmas says it in a word.

A CHRISTMAS CARD.

IN the days of Methusalem, ages ago,
Our grandfathers revelled in ice and in snow ;
But we've varied all that, it was really too slow,
And we relegate such to the mild Esquimaux.

A fig for the grievance of winterless weather,
As long as good friends can be gathered together
With spirits as light—hearts as warm—as a feather
And Time tugging gently his end of the tether.

Let the season be frosty, or windy, or wet,
The claims of old Yule we can never forget,
And we'll honour the holly as happily yet
As our ancestors did when they merrily met.

Then here's to the turkey, the goose or the gander,
To the blazing plum-pudding dyspeptics all slander,
To the mistletoe bough, and—what toast can be
grander ?—
The health of King Christmas, the Revel Commander,

BABY NEW YEAR.

ANOTHER baby-year is born,
As everybody heard this morn,
As fine a child as ever came,
Though every father says the same.
Just see him smile, and how he cries,
And how he dreams with open eyes,
And how he shuts them close to sleep
And opens them again to weep.
A little commonplace—perhaps !
But look in other people's laps
And find a better baby there
Than this that just begins to stare ;
Get one will grow just half as fast
And show such shoulder breadth at last !
He'll live as much in one short day
As all the world at once, they say.
We mean to give him lots of school
And teach him not to be a fool ;
And so when April comes he'll know
His way about the raree-show.
He'll sentimentalize in May,
And wander through the fields all day,
And doubtless—not a bit too soon—
He'll marry somebody in June.

We hope he'll make a name for work
When August apple-orchards smirk,
And fill the harvest garners up,
And brim September's cider-cup.
And if the rest of life he spends
Hobnobbing with his early friends
We'll never speak a word's complaint—
Besides he'll never bear restraint.
And more, and this is truly bad,
He'll be a glutton from a lad,
And surfeiting on Christmas pie
Before next New Year comes, he'll die !

A JANUARY THAW.

O GREAT Canadian winter,
 King Frost and Ice and Snow,
 Your sceptre's but a splinter,
 Your robes are all aflow.
 You that were bright and bracing
 Now all collapsed and raw
 Confess defeat when facing
 A January thaw.

Approach ! our latest rubbers !
 Depart ! our overshoes !
 Aye ! scoff, ye southern lubbers
 Our sealskins we refuse.
 Umbrellas wave defiant
 From every shivering paw
 That shakes to meet the giant—
 The January thaw.

Where does the snow-shoe wander ?
 Where does the skater glide ?
 And is that ruin yonder
 Our best toboggan slide ?
 Ah ! let the street-car hide us
 Upholstered deep in straw,
 Ere destiny o'er-ride us—
 The January thaw.

My vertebræ are melting,
I nurse a wild catarrh,
The rain without is pelting—
How hopeless sleigh-rides are !
Does Kate, I wonder whether,
Feel stupid as a daw—
All underneath the weather—
The January thaw ?

VALENTINE.

A YEAR or more ago I met
A maid whose eyes were blue,
And when I see her big blue eyes
I always think of you.

Pretty fair brown hair she has
In curls that fringe and flow ;
It would, if I'd a lock of it,
Remind me of you so.

Her hands are small and white and soft,
And kind in granting prayers,
And on her gemmed and gentle hands
Your size of glove she wears.

Her dainty little feet are shod
With dainty little shoes ;
Like yours they trample underfoot
Men's egotistic views.

She is a little fairy from
A broken mould of fate ;
If we should lose you all the world
Has not her duplicate.

Of course I got her photograph,
And cheaper than a song;
A friend of mine had one of you—
I robbed him—was I wrong?

And now you guess the riddle, dear,
You know you're both the same,
And I admire you twice as much
As any other flame.

FATE, THE MILKMAN.

My Fate's a wicked dairy-man
 Who sells me skim and charges cream,
 Puts "Human-kindness" on his can,
 And cold pump-water on my dream.

With deprecatory pretence
 He begs his dues like other prigs—
 My time, my labour, and my pence,
 And steals my tit-bits for his pigs.

I asked him why the milk I buy
 Is worse than theirs who dress in silk,
 But craftily he made reply—
 "I furnish them with asses' milk!"

I'd gladly change, but where I dwell
 He quite controls his branch of trade;
 He is an anchorite as well
 And does not keep a dairy-maid.

O Milkman Fate! these many years
 Your human-kindness mocks my thirst;
 Your sweetest milk is salt with tears
 And on such food my hopes are nursed.

EYE WISDOM.

WHEN man relies on woman's eyes
 His destiny to shew forth,
 Let him beware the black arts there,
 The treachery and so forth.
 Each dear deceit seems oh ! so sweet,
 Desirable and truthful,
 The fools make haste deep joy to taste
 And suck a bitter toothful.

Eyes raven black may well bring back
 One's dread of that dark omen,
 And eyes of grey will soon betray
 One's credence in a woman.
 Soft eyes of brown will reap renown
 For falsehood with the bluest,—
 In every pair lies love's despair,
 The newest are the truest.

The Chinese play looks very gay
 With lamps of colored paper,
 When every flame burns just the same
 Upon a tallow taper.
 So women's eyes, if men were wise,
 Are lanterns highly tinted,
 A tallow kind of light behind,
 And tallow rather stinted.

ONE OF THE LEFT.

My rival was wealthier far,
 And his face had a handsomer cast ;
 He could smoke a delicious cigar,
 I was morally strong—he was fast.

He had jilted two earlier girls,
 I discountenance people who flirt ;
 When I called him a swine among pearls,
 He called me a swine among dirt.

He always threw dust in her eyes,
 While I strove to enlighten her youth ;
 He told her all manner of lies
 While I manfully stuck to the truth.

When I asked her at last to be mine
 I found he had asked to be hers ;—
 He had promised her France and the Rhine—
 I, the blessings a true heart confers.

I offered her love and a home,
 But the programme omitted to ~~know~~ ;
 My music was paper and comb,
 While he blew his horn with *eclat*.

Now I'm fully recovered from pique
And my heart is as whole as a bung,
But she hasn't her sorrows to seek
And he's sick of the sound of her tongue.

Though marriage may be a success—
A point on which few are agreed—
In courtship—the primary mess,
To fail is good fortune indeed.

TO BEAUTY ASLEEP AMONG LILIES.

BY SWINBURNE JONES.

MEAGRE measure of a garment garbs the dreaming
dream divine,
Brood of beauties that like stars in stately constella-
tion shine,
Face of fancy, flower of fancy, the adroitest feat of
fate,
Figure fraught with fascination, form that Hate alone
could hate,
Angel ankles, members matching, fair as this could
nothing be,
Sight of sights uncited hereto, soul-sweet-surfeiting
to see.

*THE PEANUT BALLADS.**(To be read in the Belfast vernacular.)**I. THE PEANUT STAND.*

There's a mighty tidy city at the foot of the Cave
Hill,

Where my father was a hackler in the Edenderry
Mill,

And my uncle was an Islandman, a rivetter to trade,
And sweated on the longest keels and speediest ever
laid ;

For they say the White Star passes all the flags that
sail the sea,

And every Nic and Tic of them was built on Belfast
Quay.

But there's far too many boys at home, so in a foreign
land;

That's how I came to settle at a peanut stand.

I landed in Toronto, and I walked about for days,
Till my pocket was as empty as a nest where nothing
lays ;

I went without my tea one day, and breakfast, and
for lunch

I found a little picking on a bad banana bunch.

I tightened up my braces like you tighten up a drum
And I felt a sight too hollow only sucking at my
thumb,
But my chance came round immediately as if it had
been planned,
And I'm making dollars steady at my peanut stand.

I was coming round a corner when I lit upon a fight,
A big man on a little one which never yet was right,
The big one full of liquor till he couldn't hold his
views,
And the wee one full of nothing but the bones he
couldn't lose.
'Twas a dirty-fisted Dago with a black-a-visted face,
And a pair of yellow peepers would have frightened
you from grace,
But the big one stole some peanuts and the Dago held
his hand,
Till I helped to cure the trouble at the peanut stand.

If you lived upon the Lagan you'd have muscles in
your skin,
And sure all the good Belfast in me just rose and
waded in ;
So he left the little Dago but I clipped him in the neck,
And his liquor lost its virtue when I dropped him on
the deck.
He rose and looked me over, and he swore what he
would do,
But he thought too long about it, and the crowd
allowed him through,

Well, sir, the little Dago up and offered me his hand,
And that's how he got a partner at the peanut stand.

Now this small Italian Dago-man was old, and thin,
and done,

Or it wasn't in his nature for to treat me like a son,
But as soon as I let on that I was starving for a meal,
He set me up a dinner would have done for Lord
O'Neill.

And from that I got to helping him, and wheeling
home his cart,

And for all he was a heathen, yet it wasn't to the heart ;
So we worked along together, till the snow fell on the
land,

And left us next to powerless at the peanut stand.

He hadn't one to own him, or to call upon in need,
And we didn't have a deal of crack through differing
in breed,

But we got along harmonious till the frost got in his
chest,

And he lay down weak one evening, and was plainly
near his rest.

He slept awhile in quiet, and I thought he'd last till
light,

But he took a turn towards morning, and sat up
most cruel white,

And I saw the life was leaving him like water leaving
sand,

As he told me how I'd have to keep the peanut stand,

He maybe would have liked a priest to put him on
his way,
But I couldn't leave him lying there alone in death's
dismay ;
So I got a little crucifix he kept among his clothes
And thought how Roaring Hanna used to preach to
love your foes
When the Teagues were extra bitter at the Sabbath
scholars' trips,
And for all I was an Orangeman I held it to his lips.
The Lord has many a way it seems of reaching out
His hand,
And the creature never fretted for his peanut stand.

Good luck has kept near hand me since the poor old
being died,
And I hope it helps to comfort him wherever he may
bide.
I'm doing bravely since although a Papist gave the
start,
And now I've put in apples and a pony to the cart.
It won't be very long before I open up a store,
So one thing brings another when you're looking out
for more,
For I wrote to Pollie Rea I was her sweetheart to
command,
And she says she'll share the profits of the peanut
stand,

II. THE PEANUT WEDDING.

THERE'S far too much advice about the way we ought
to marry,
For no matter what you follow likely lands you in
a hole,
And heaps of decent couples that are going to old
Harry,
Are spoiled by friends' advice, upsetting notions,
and the Bowl.
For advice, I listen freely, and I do what I think pro-
per,
And I never drank that much but I could keep my
powder dry ;
As for pride, I take a fortune for a fortune—gold or
copper—
And for rank—well, Pollie thinks there's none can
stand with Sam McKay.

Some folks believe this life is only one of many
threaded
On the strands of life and death like sleep and
waking day by day,
And the friends that we have gathered, and the wives
that we have wedded,
Just old acquaintance newly dressed in fashionable
clay.

If it's true that we're rewarded here for foregone
 deeds and doings,
 'Twould be only fair and square and make it worth
 your while to try,
 'Twould explain a lot to know we're only supping our
 own brewings,
 And maybe tell why Pollie Rea is Mrs. Sam McKay.

Her friends were in a better way of doing than my
 father's,
 And the time I saw her first was running barefoot
 on the street,
 I told my ma I'd marry her, but all I got was
 "Blathers,
 "A boy like you had better think of working for
 his meat."
 Thirteen I was ; the last five years, my uncle had me
 schooling
 At the Ballymena Model till it happened him to
 die ;
 I had to leave it for Belfast, but spite of lots of fooling
 There was only Harry Kennedy ahead of Sam
 McKay.

I used to go to church to see her sitting there fornenst
 me,
 So she grew from eight to twenty and I came to
 twenty-five ;
 And though I sparked a lot of girls and had it laid
 against me,

They never altered Pollie Rea with all they could contrive.

Of course she was a teacher and a good deal set above me,

But she went with me to Bangor once—my heart was in the sky—

And round by Ballyholme she let it out she'd always love me,

And she said she'd do her best to make a man of Sam McKay.

Old country notions have it you must marry in your station,

Be it teacher and mechanic, or a princess and a peer,

So with that and slack employment I gave up my situation,

And with Pollie's love and photograph I emigrated here.

Peanuts and luck befriended me, and after five years' saving,

I sent her home her passage, and for all she'd want to buy,

Then I met her on the "Sarnia" with her handkerchief a-waving,

And the Montreal good man and *her* soon married Sam McKay.

We came down the Thousand Islands in the steamer to Toronto

And I left the store to Billy for the balance of the week;

I thought we'd see Niagara, because I knew she'd want to

Before she settled down for good among the kitchen reek.

We saw the whole belongings round that water always pouring,

And I couldn't sleep with listening to it never running dry,

And thinking of the waste of it, the dashing and the roaring,

'Twould turn my head to live at it as sure as I'm McKay.

But Pollie kissed me every night for bringing her to see it;

The rainbow on the water-mist she said was worth God's while;

The water was a wonder, but the Finger that could free it

Was the marvel far beyond them all—Niagara or the Nile!

I think she has more mind than *me*, or had more exercising,

For I'd rather hear a katy-did or see a strange bird fly,

Than spend my time with water-falls, and things as much surprising,

But that makes us complementary, says Mrs. Sam McKay.

The places Captain Webb was in the guides were
bound to show us
Till I wondered what they talked about before his
foolish vow;
And we drove to see the Whirlpool boiling far away
below us
Where I thought I saw a dog was drowned, but sure
it was a cow.
And now we've seen it end to end I'm glad we're home
in quiet,
And settled in our own wee house with not a tear
to cry,
Away out near the Woodbine where land's cheap
enough to buy it,
And friends are always welcome warm to Mrs. Sam
McKay.

III. A PEANUT LEGEND.

YOUNG Hezekiah Mee fell deep in love with Ethel Murphy,

So William Dander told me on the Island last July,
We were lying snug and shady where the grass was soft and turf'y,

And the Bay was boiling over, and the boats were in a fry.

Now Dander beats the old one when it comes to telling stories,

And he'll talk a month of Sundays if you let him smoke his clay;

Och! he's great about his travels, or on Ireland's ancient glories,

And you never met his equal yet when day-li'-gone* is gray.

Well, Miss Ethel was an orphan, and an heiress, William started,

And as lovely as Queen Vashti, and by all accounts as proud,

But Hezekiah doted on her, not a bit downhearted,
Because he was no more to her than any in the crowd.

*Day-light gone, i.e., twilight.

He wasn't too well favoured, and he wasn't very clever,
 And thirty bob a week was every penny of his pay,
 But with managing he spruced himself and did his
 best endeavour,
 And joined the Linen Hall*, and read the books in
 section K.

He came no speed at all at all in meeting with the lady,
 And it's very well he didn't, for he'd just have got a
 snub,
 But he kept on saving money and one fine and happy
 pay-day
 He bought a brand new bicycle and joined the
 Richmond Club.
 And after that by day and night he dreamt on tracks
 and training,
 Till the joggling of his legs would knock the blan-
 kets all astray,
 And he'd start awake and hurry, be the weather dry
 or raining,
 To be out and on the cinder-pad before the screek
 of day.

He knew she wouldn't speak to him unless he could
 be famous,
 And he never could catch up to that unless it was
 on wheels,
 But he thought he'd learn Miss Ethel he was not an
 ignoramus
 When he owned the champion muscles and the
 smartest pair of heels.

*Reading-room and Library.

The spring of eighty-four it was he started first at racing,

At the Easter sports in April he was premier of the day;

There had been a lot of preaching that athletics were debasing,

"And I'll debase the record," Hezekiah said, "in May."

His form was something wonderful, his spurting led the fashion,

And nothing in Belfast could touch him one to fifty miles;

But still he was the victim of an agitating passion,
And as far away as ever from Miss Ethel Murphy's smiles.

So he notified the Club and they appointed a committee

To time him on the morning of the twenty-fourth of May,

And they gathered bright and early, at the morning prime so pretty,

With Dander's big chronometer to regulate the play.

The Lagan ran like silver in the morning sunlight shining,

And the great trees wore their greenest of the fresh and dewy spring,

The Ormeau Park is beautiful, but fair beyond divining
In the first rich life of summer ere the Mayfly takes its wing.

An even mile the race track ran, through planes and elms and beeches,

And the Captain had his ticker ready waiting Mee to mount,

When a tall, dark man came forward, and an oilcan out he reaches,

And says, "Just you try this oil here ; it will help your wheels to count."

Well, Hezekiah oiled again, ball-bearings, head and pedals,

And thanked the tall dark stranger and remounted his machine,

While the Captain looked annoyed, the way you look at one that meddles,

But gave the word and started him while interest got keen.

"Three-forty-three," cried Dander as he closed the first lap easy,

"He needs a man to speed him," cried the Bugler with conceit;

"He's waiting on his wind," said one ; "I noticed he was wheezy,"

But walking off, half-laughing, said the stranger, "It's the heat."

The second mile was better ; said the Captain "Three-eleven,"

As he swept down round the corner past the crowd upon the grass,

And they cheered him loud and hearty at the third
 "Two-fifty-seven,"

And they saw his teeth set steady as they gave him
 room to pass.

The fourth one finished "Fifty-two," and gathering
 round the ticker,

They wondered as they watched him spurting down
 the long, straight track,

To lose him at the turn among the trees, till quick
 and quicker,

And humming like a bee among the bushes, he came
 back.

"Two-forty-one," they yelled and screeched, as on he
 went still faster;

"He'll whack the record hollow if he's only fit to
 stay."

Some cautious fellows muttered they were feared of
 a disaster,

"His wheel might buckle under him; the rubber
 might give way."

But the sixth mile reeled below him, and the record
 went to pieces

As the seventh one was finished with a cheer that
 tore the air;

"Two-twenty-eight and game for more. Each lap
 the pace increases."

Said the Captain, "Mr. Bugler, you can speed him
 if you care."

The eighth and ninth went higher, and the tenth just
touched two minutes;

Then even William Dander thought they'd pretty
near enough,

And the whole lot got that quiet they could hear a
pair of linnets

That were singing right behind them, and the
Captain tore his cuff,

But on went Hezekiah, never slackening, never minding,
But whizzing round the corners sharp at forty-five
degrees,

Till they noticed at the thirteenth lap, as harder he
came grinding,

A sort of steam behind him on the light May morn-
ing breeze.

A mist like thin tobacco reek, uncanny and mysterious,
And his eye was fiery flaming as he passed them
once again,

"We must stop him," then said Dander; "Yes," the
Captain said, "It's serious;

It looks like he was melting since he finished off
the ten."

But he flew ahead still faster at a rate beyond all
telling;

They heard the spokes revolving with a gruesome
sort of scream,

A sweeping, whirling past them, some terrific force
impelling,

He turned the eighteenth corner in a drifting cloud
of steam.

But when he came the next time there was nothing of
 the vapour,
 The crying noise the spokes had made had faded
 clean away,
 His face seemed half-transparent with a look of tissue
 paper,
 And his flannels looked like gossamer or cobweb
 silver grey.
 But his eyes kept burning, burning, though he seemed
 so light and airy,
 As he did the mile a minute and went by them like
 a flash ;
 And then the Bugler fainted, as it seems, to be con-
 trary,
 And falling on two bicycles, upset them with a crash.

'Twas somehow then they lost him with the fainting
 and the flurry,
 Some said he took the Lagan Village, some the
 Ormeau Gate ;
 But they got the Bugler better and went homeward
 in a hurry,
 And agreed to keep it quiet, and they never ride
 out late.
 Yet the queerest thing about it all was what they
 heard at dinner ;
 That morning, very suddenly, Miss Ethel Murphy
 died.
 And Dander says it makes him creep and feel a
 bigger sinner
 To think of what he saw of Hezekiah's phantom ride.

IV. PEANUT MEMORIES.

DID you ever feel that lonesome like that nothing
could content you,

With your heart all swollen, rolling like a river-tide
at flood,

Till the weëst things that happened would that fidget
and torment you

The sight of them you fed and clothed would poison
all your blood ?

I felt like that last year in March one evening after
quetting,

'Twas the seventeenth of Ireland coming set me
thinking long,

A hen on a hot griddle never equalled me for fretting
So I took a dander after dark to clear up what was
wrong.

The stars were bright—so clear and bright—I couldn't
look below them,

And I never felt the frost-wind blowing bitter
through my coat,

For they every one kept shining down and asking
did I know them,

Did I mind at Ballymena on the fairy-forayed
Moat ?

Did I mind them? Could I think of any other mortal notion,

With nothing changed about them but the boy that saw them shine;

If the Hebrews turned their noses up at Canaan after Goshen

Sure an Irish heart may hanker for the home ayont the brine?

I was homesick, that's the long-come-short, and five good miles and *farder*

I travelled up and down before I got a bit of peace,
For a man that has a wife and wean to shift for takes it harder

When his feelings turn and gabble at him like a flock of geese.

And still one great big star kept shining, shining clear and glorious,

And a voice it had kept asking with a tongue that wouldn't tire,

I could hear it still and quiet though the night-wind blew uproarious—

"Do you think your mother's happy by her lonely kitchen-fire?"

My heart rose like a boat upon a surging crest of sorrow

And sank away to nothing in a trough of sore despair;

I had no use to live at all; I'd give the Lord's to-morrow

To be just a wee wee boy again beside my mother's chair.

The glow of later summers touches childhood with such gilding

That all the gold of life between looks dark and dull and dim;

And manhood's chant, and labour's lay, the songs of fortune-building,

Sound harsh to ears that hear again the far-off children's hymn.

I was back again in Lorimerstown, a barefoot wean of seven,

Winding bobbins, dropping praties, dibbling plants, or mixing swill,

Or free by law or license to get one whole day from heaven,

Going wading, catching spricklies at the foot of Church's hill.

Or chasing things with picture wings in spite of regulations

Through clover-fields and corn-fields, pulling cress at Vincent's well,

Or finding nests and scaring rabbits over Young's plantations,

And clodding stones and climbing, doing things I durstn't tell.

And coming home worn out at last, with clothes in
want of mending,
And meeting mother, shamefaced for the clabber
on them thick ;
And seeing father weaving as I left him, only bending
A little more above the heddles, looking white and
sick ;
And eating fadge and soda-bread, and washing in the
bucket,
And sleeping somewhere, soon and snug, with
mother singing low—
We get the balance seldom but that night the star-
shine struck it,
And my heart was wrenched to learn the price a
man must pay to grow.

Yet life is well worth living and I hurried home to
Pollie,
And she wasn't vexed a bit because I left her feel-
ing blue ;
She's sense and comfort always when I feel a twinge
of folly,
And life's a great investment when your wife has
wit for two.
I told her all I thought and how I wanted baby's
grannie
To come across in summer-time and stay with us
awhile ;
How proud she'd be to get the chance to nurse our
own wee mannie,
Nor ever interfering in the husband's mother's style.

And Pollie said she didn't want to go back home this long time,
But she'd dearly love to see a face just fresh from old Belfast,
When the year had spread to spring-time, grown to flower-time, turned to song-time,
She would like to look in Irish eyes and talk about the past.
And that's how mother's visit in the summer-time was settled,
She made no bones about it when we wrote for her to come ;
True love goes round the world, she said, and mother's love's high mettled,
And the older still the abler, and the Lord puts down the sum.

V. A PEANUT ROMANCE.

It's William Dander tells the crack of Billy McIlvane,
Though every man and child from Portglenone to
Cushendall

Kenned Billy well and worthy, since the time he was
a wean

Till the day they took him coffined from Ahoghill
Orange Hall.

For Dander says he beat the heathen god upon the
fife,

And every Twelfth the lodges had him aye in great
request;

It was wonderful to hear him, but it took away his
life,

And the tune was never made could pay a man to
spoil his chest.

But Dander says the fifing never hurted him at all,
'Twas the wetting, and the damp and cold, and
getting chilled at night;

He says that Billy told him when he took too sick to
crawl

How misfortunate a thing it was, and wanted it told
right.

'Twas one of Billy's ways to go round showing how
to play
To a wheen of fellows living all about the country
side,
And they had him at lint-pullings, and at Orange
Balls for pay,
For 'twas well-known his fifing beat all fiddling
far and wide.

He was used to coming home at any hour you'd see
the stars,
From every art in ten townlands and mostly all his
lone,
So he'd play the fife for company, and fight King
William's wars,
And study all the queer old days behind King
William's throne.
But Billy was no luny—he was there when God made
brains—
A bogle couldn't scare him—he heard tell of them
before,
And he never thought of fairies only sporting with
the weans,
May-eve at hanging May-flowers for a charm at
every door.

But after this thing happened him it give his head a
twist;
Stepping home one night by ghost-light to the tune
of *Colleen dhas*,

When he came to Tullygarley brig the Braid was all
a mist,
And speech came from the thick of it forbidding
him to pass.
With a voice that wasn't mortal in a mist—and noth-
ing more—
Thinks Billy "There are times to run, and them
that can't run, prays ;
I'm afeard it is a woman," and he either prayed or
swore,
" I'm afeard it's not the welcome sort that dresses
up in stays."

By this the mist was clearing off, and Billy looking
down
Sees standing in the flood, or swimming—sorrow
one knows which—
The loveliest kind of female between that and Lime-
rick town,
With the general look and beauty of an Irish water-
witch.
Says she, " Billy, I am lonesome." " Well," says Billy,
" I'm afeard
I haven't seen your family lately," speaking quite
polite;
" If you like, Mem," he kept talking, picking up and
feeling cheered
To see such melting eyes, " I'll post a letter if you'll
write."

"Och, Billy, that's not it at all. I want to have a friend;
If you'll come down to the waterside and listen for awhile
I'll try and make you sensible how far my powers extend,
And how much we'd help each other," and with that she give a smile.
So down went Billy on the bank, just trusting to his luck,
And she led him to a quiet place near where the waters meet.
She could swim without a ripple, floating easy as a duck,
But he never found out whether it was with a tail or feet.

She kept him and conversed him till the glinting of the dawn,
And trysted him for that night week at Lisnafillan Green,
And through that year all round the Maine and Braid she led him on,
With tales of queer outlandish things and words of love between.
She must have had a notion of him, seeing all she did,
And what she told him, how he lived in ages long ago,
A harper to King Brian, and far more his wit kept hid,
Since people just would laugh, he said, at what they didn't know.

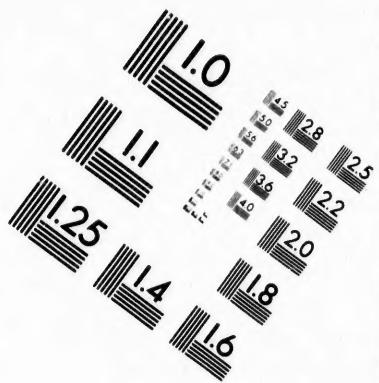
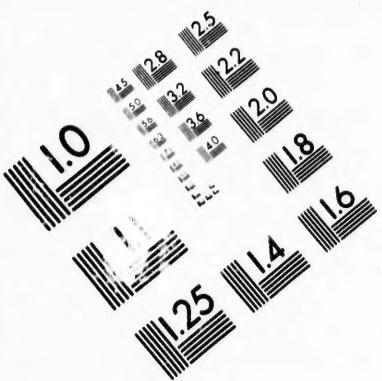
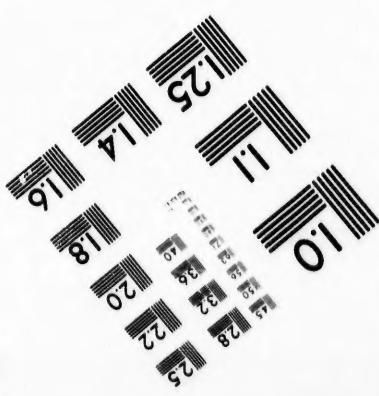
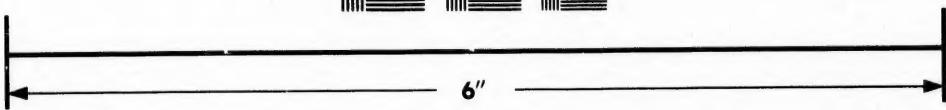
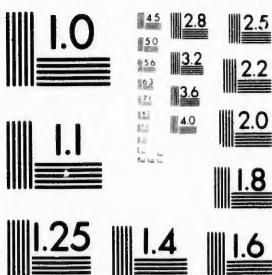


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He said her name was Moira, and she once had great
renown,

And mighty proud she made him with a serpent
ring of fate,

But what he set most store by was a fife she brought
him down

From where it lay below the Boyne since James
went out of date.

The music Billy made with it was past belief to hear,
You'd thought the stars were singing when you
heard him in the dark,

And I've known old David Herbison, the poet, say
"Ay, dear,

I'd just as soon hear Billy as a blackbird or a lark."

But Billy's music died away ; the silver notes had rest,
And Dander promised solemnly they'd never sound
again ;

That he'd take the fife in friendliness, was Billy's last
request,

And fling it in the water where the Braid flows in
the Maine.

And William Dander did it when the moon was sink-
ing low,

And a mist swept up the river with a lamentation
sore ;

The tongue was past man's knowledge, but the mean-
ing seemed to go —

" Oh, Billy, you're my darling, but I'll never see you
more ! "

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